United Nations S/PV.8337

Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8337th meeting
Thursday, 30 August 2018, 10.20 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Allen	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mrs. Cordova Soria
	China	Mr. Lie Cheng
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Adom
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Kuwait	Mr. Albanai
	Netherlands	Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren
	Peru	Mr. Tenya
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sweden	Mr. Orrenius Skau
	United States of America	Mr. Hunter

Agenda

The situation in Guinea-Bissau

Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (S/2018/771)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

18-27180 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Guinea Bissau

Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (S/2018/771)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Guinea-Bissau to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Aristides Gomes, Prime Minister of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, and I request the Protocol Officer to escort him to his seat at the Council table.

Mr. Aristides *Gomes, Prime Minister of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, was escorted to a seat at the Council table.*

The President: In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. José Viegas Filho, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau; His Excellency Mr. Mauro Vieira, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission; and Ms. Elisa Maria Tavares Pinto, spokesperson for the Economic Community of West African States Women, Peace and Security Network.

Ms. Tavares Pinto is joining today's meeting via video-teleconference from Bissau.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/771, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau.

At this meeting, we will hear briefings by Mr. José Viegas Filho, Ambassador Mr. Anatolio Ndong Mba, Permanent Representative of Equatorial Guinea, in his capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2048 (2012), concerning Guinea-Bissau, Ambassador Vieira and Ms. Tavares Pinto.

As the third meeting of the Council this morning and with so many briefers, I would like to remind Council members that they are encouraged to speak for no longer than five minutes, as set out in document S/2017/507, and encourage our briefers also to be concise.

I now give the floor to Mr. Viegas Filho.

Mr. Filho: I thank the Security Council for this opportunity to introduce the Secretary-General's report (S/2018/771) on the situation in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS). I am honoured to brief the Council for the first time since I assumed office, on 28 May.

I would also like to acknowledge the presence of His Excellency Mr. Aristides Gomes, Prime Minister of Guinea-Bissau, with whom I am honoured to share this platform. I commend his initiative to travel to New York to personally apprise the Council of his Government's efforts at this crucial phase in the country's transition, with legislative elections foreseen in the very near future.

I would also like to welcome your initiative, Mr. President, to invite the voice of civil society and of women of Guinea-Bissau to this meeting, through Ms. Elisa Tavares Pinto. Her perspectives and insights will, no doubt, further enrich the Council's deliberations.

As the Secretary-General's report is before members, I will limit my statement to recent political developments and the activities of UNIOGBIS. I will then be ready to answer any questions Council members may have in the private consultations.

Since my arrival in Guinea-Bissau, the political and security situation has remained relatively calm. Authorities and political actors have focused on preparations for the legislative elections scheduled for 18 November. I have actively used my good offices with national and international partners to support the full implementation of the 2016 Conakry Agreement, with special emphasis on the ongoing preparations for the elections. I have prioritized engaging national stakeholders on the electoral process and met regularly with the President of the Republic and the Prime

Minister to stress that respect for the existing legal framework and the electoral calendar is indispensable for sustained stability. I also routinely convened and led meetings of the group of five international partners in Guinea-Bissau, working to maintain our unified stance on the need for the timely holding of elections and to urge the Prime Minister to adopt a coordinated approach with national authorities and international partners.

At the regional and international levels, I visited Lomé in June to meet with the Presidents of Guinea and Togo, in their capacities as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Mediator for Guinea-Bissau and then Chairperson of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, respectively, to exchange views on the implementation of the Conakry Agreement and advocate for financial and material support from the subregion for the upcoming elections.

In July, I attended the Conference of the Heads of State and Government of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP) in Cabo Verde to discuss the persisting technical and financial challenges confronting the electoral process, and to appeal for technical and financial support for Guinea-Bissau. To those ends, I held bilateral meetings with the Presidents of Angola, Brazil, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique, as well as the Prime Minister of Cabo Verde and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Portugal.

Later in July, the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government discussed the situation in Guinea-Bissau during its fifty-third ordinary session. The summit, inter alia, approved funds that contributed to filling the gap in the electoral budget, and called for legislative elections to be held on 18 November, as scheduled. I intend to continue my engagement with relevant national and international actors as preparations for the elections enter the final stages.

While key provisions of the Conakry Agreement have been implemented, a national dialogue round table for the adoption of a stability pact is yet to be held. The Government has launched related consultations with political parties represented in the National Assembly and intends to broaden consultations to include civil society so as to have the pact adopted in early October, before the start of the election campaign. UNIOGBIS will continue to work closely with the Government and to strengthen civil society engagement in the process. We are, however, conscious that the holding of timely and credible elections is of paramount importance at this juncture. This is a basic short-term goal that must be accomplished to usher in the new political dispensation for further reforms and consolidation.

Preparations for the legislative elections continue to face difficulties. The Government set a 30-day time frame for voter registration, starting on 23 August, in spite of disagreements voiced by some political parties, since the law stipulates a 90-day period for the process. Moreover, the arrival of biometric kits for the process has been delayed. The Government of Guinea-Bissau is working closely with Nigeria, Cabo Verde and Timor-Leste to expedite the arrival of the kits.

I am pleased to report that a funding gap in the budget for the elections may have been closed following pledges by several international partners, including Italy, Japan and the United States, as well as ECOWAS, the European Union and the Monetary and Economic Union of West Africa. UNIOGBIS will persevere in its efforts to support the Government in the urgent materialization of such pledges. In that regard, I welcome the recent disbursement of $500,000 by ECOWAS to the electoral basket fund.

Steps are also being taken towards ensuring that elections are conducted peacefully. In that context, and in response to a request from the Government, ECOWAS intends to reinforce the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau ahead of both the legislative elections in 2018 and the presidential election in 2019. UNIOGBIS will continue to provide the necessary and possible support to efforts to ensure a peaceful and secure environment for the entire electoral process.

UNIOGBIS continues to work closely with the ad hoc commission of the National Assembly on the review of the Constitution and has made efforts towards enhancing civil society participation in upcoming consultations. In August, the Mission provided technical and financial support for a retreat with the members of the commission to initiate the review of the draft constitution, which the commission intends to submit for consideration by the newly elected National Assembly.

Concerning the fight against drug trafficking and organized crime, UNIOGBIS, in coordination with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, has reinforced its support to national authorities, including through the co-location of specialized personnel from within the mission's existing supports with law enforcement agencies in Bissau and the regions. Partly

as a result, national authorities have continued to seize illegal drugs transiting through the international airport in Bissau, the Transnational Crime Unit has resumed operations, and cross-border controls have been strengthened. In response to a Government request, UNIOGBIS is also providing technical assistance for the development of a national action plan to combat drug trafficking and transnational organized crime. Problems, however, are persistent and much has yet to be done until the situation can be considered to be under control.

A significant development relating to gender equality and women's empowerment was the adoption, on 2 August, of a gender parity quota law setting a minimum of 36 per cent for women's participation in the lists of candidates for legislative and local Government elections, as well as for appointments to key decision-making positions. The draft is expected to be promulgated into law by the President before the November elections. UNIOGBIS will continue to support the process.

It is my impression that the recent political developments in Guinea-Bissau offer a possibility for a more favourable appreciation of the country's situation. It seems now more likely than a few weeks ago that legislative elections will take place as scheduled on 18 November. The consolidation of long-term stability remains contingent on the successful holding of legislative elections and on how the country manages the reform process. Far-reaching reforms remain imperative to prevent a future relapse into political and institutional instability. I therefore urge international partners to maintain and increase their political, technical and financial support to help national institutions during and beyond the legislative and presidential elections. I also welcome the continued engagement of the Peacebuilding Commission in helping sustain attention to, and funding for, peacebuilding in Guinea-Bissau.

In conclusion, I would like to commend ECOWAS for its effective and continued engagement in Guinea-Bissau in a sustained manner in playing a critical role in helping national stakeholders find the path to lasting peace and stability. I also express my sincere appreciation to all bilateral and multilateral partners, especially the African Union, the CPLP and the European Union, together with ECOWAS, for their continued partnership and commitment to the consolidation of peace in Guinea-Bissau. I also salute the contribution of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, chaired by my friend the Ambassador of Brazil. I would like also to convey my gratitude to the Security Council for its close monitoring of the situation and continued commitment to promoting peace and stability in Guinea-Bissau. I will be ready to answer members' questions.

The President: I thank Mr. Filho for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Ndong Mba.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): Before I begin my briefing, allow me to warmly welcome His Excellency Prime Minister Aristides Gomes and His Excellency Mr. João Ribeiro Butiam Có, Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Communities. Their presence at this meeting is clear proof of the considerable interest in the new dynamic promoted by the authorities in Guinea-Buissau to bring the country back to a state of peace, stability and respect for constitutional order.

I have the honour to inform the members of the Security Council, in my capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2048 (2012), concerning Guinea-Bissau, of my visit to Bissau and Conakry from 25 to 29 June. It was the second visit to Guinea-Bissau by the Sanctions Committee Chair, the most recent visit having been undertaken by my predecessor, Ambassador Rosselli of Uruguay, in mid-June 2017. The purpose of my visit was to gain first-hand information on the effective implementation of the sanctions measures imposed under resolution 2048 (2012) and to discuss progress in the restoration of constitutional order in Guinea-Bissau. I was accompanied on my visit by a representative of the Secretariat. Representatives of the local Embassies of China, Côte d'Ivoire, the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom joined me and participated in the meetings I held in Bissau and Conakry.

During our discussions, I emphasized the importance of continuing the dialogue and engagement with the many national and international stakeholders with the aim of seeking a way out of the political impasse in Guinea-Bissau and finding a lasting solution. I also stressed that the international community should continue to support Guinea-Bissau, especially in the light of the upcoming legislative and presidential elections and related technical and financial issues, and that it should take concrete measures to create a stable political environment.

I emphasized that the Security Council continues to attach importance to the situation in Guinea-Bissau and that the overall objective of the sanctions regime was not to punish, pressure or change the leadership, but rather to contribute to the establishment of stability in the country and support positive change in the subregion. There is still some confusion about the scope of the travel-ban restrictions, and I made sure to explain the procedures to the authorities during my visit.

While the situation in Guinea-Bissau remains generally stable and shows encouraging progress, the political uncertainty in the light of the upcoming elections threatens to undermine the calm in the country. To date, the constitutional order does not seem to be directly threatened, but the uncertainty over the division of power between the President and the Prime Minister continues to be the basis of political disputes. In addition, the political leaders still have to draft and implement important reforms, particularly in the security and justice sectors.

International and regional efforts and initiatives to find a lasting solution to the political crisis seem to have been effective so far. However, the international community should continue to monitor the situation in the country closely, also taking into account that some key elements of the road map for peace envisaged in the Conakry Agreement on the Implementation of the Economic Community of West African States Roadmap for the Resolution of the Political Crisis in Guinea-Bissau still need to be implemented.

The security situation is stable given that no incident of significant violence has been recorded, the army does not interfere in politics and, in general, human rights are respected. However, there is still great concern over the activities related to transnational crime and illicit trafficking. The feeling and the view of most of the interlocutors was that the sanctions had been effective in deterring possible disruptive elements. However, many interlocutors continue to demand that sanctions be imposed against politicians responsible for the political crisis, which is still perceived as an issue that has not yet been fully resolved.

I took note of the initiatives undertaken by the Security Council, the African Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the ECOWAS Mediator for Guinea-Bissau, Mr. Alpha Condé, President of the Republic of Guinea, the European Union, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) and the international community with a view to supporting and encouraging Guinea-Bissau in overcoming the political stalemate.

The visit reflects the positive momentum for cooperation between the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2048 (2012) and the Government of Guinea-Bissau, which should be maintained and improved. I also noted that the political actors and civil society were keen to discuss and to put forward their views to the Committee, which leads me to believe that an ongoing dialogue between the Committee and the Council and the Bissau-Guineans is necessary.

On 16 July, I reported to the Committee and provided recommendations. In particular, I focused my attention on the need for a timely revision of the sanctions list, taking into account the current circumstances, the developments in Guinea-Bissau and the views expressed by the relevant interlocutors interviewed during my visit.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the authorities of Guinea-Bissau and Guinea-Conakry for their warm welcome and for the fruitful meetings held, as well as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. José Viegas Filho, the United Nations Resident Coordinator and Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme, Ms. Séraphine Wakana, and her team for the excellent support provided during my visit.

The President: I thank Ambassador Ndong Mba for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Vieira.

Mr. Vieira: I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for the invitation to address the Security Council in my capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Since my most recent briefing to the Security Council, on 16 May (see S/PV.8261), I have made a trip to Guinea-Bissau and Portugal, from 24 to 27 July, in my capacity as Chair of the configuration. That mission was undertaken to obtain first-hand accounts on the implementation of all the provisions of the Conakry Agreement and, most important, the organization of the legislative elections.

During my visit to Bissau, I consulted extensively with a broad range of stakeholders, including the President of the Republic, the Speaker of the National Assembly, the Prime Minister — Mr. Aristides Gomes — the President of the Supreme Court, several ministers and members of all political parties represented in the National Assembly, as well as some parties not represented in Parliament. I also held meetings with the President of the National Electoral Commission and with representatives of the international community and of the United Nations. In addition, I took part in meetings with civil society representatives of Guinea-Bissau.

In Lisbon, on 27 July, I met with the Director-General of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP), Ms. Georgina de Mello, when we discussed the role of the Community in supporting Guinea-Bissau and in helping to find a solution to the political situation.

My mission affirmed that there has been tangible progress in the implementation of the Conakry Agreement and in the process of return to normal political life, as compared to the same period last year, when I first visited the country. There is a renewed sense of optimism with regard to a definitive solution to the protracted crisis, and the upcoming elections are seen as a window of opportunity to that end. The Conakry Agreement remains a fundamental point of reference for most political actors; all the stakeholders consulted stressed the need to expedite its implementation.

Among the achievements that I witnessed, allow me to underline the following important developments that took place in the past months: the appointment of a consensual Prime Minister and the formation of an inclusive Government; the approval of a Government programme and of the national budget; and the reopening of the National Assembly.

With respect to the electoral process, during my visit the Government of Guinea-Bissau reaffirmed its intention to hold legislative elections on 18 November. All members of the national authorities whom I met manifested their support for respecting that established date. The holding of elections is also considered by political actors a crucial exercise for the country to return to stability. The election builds on the positive political developments in the past months and the opening of space for political dialogue, as well as the provisions of the Constitution of Guinea-Bissau. Many of my interlocutors also stated that any postponement of the election would prolong the crisis and would be frustrating for the population, the political actors and the international community.

Let me also state that I heard no support for deferring the November election in favour of joint presidential and parliamentary elections in 2019. The President of Guinea-Bissau, His Excellency Mr. José Mario Vaz, received me for a meeting and expressed his full support for my mission in Bissau. On that occasion, he outlined to me his three current priorities for the country: first, the holding of legislative elections on 18 November; secondly, the reform of the security sector, including the establishment of a pension fund for the military; and, thirdly, combating drug trafficking and organized crime — a point that was recently included in the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) by the Security Council.

During my visit, I reaffirmed to all my interlocutors that I have indeed noticed progress in the political situation of the country. I also underlined the importance of holding elections on 18 November as a conclusion to the transition towards stability in accordance with national solutions and in full respect of the Constitution.

It is important to mention that, while stakeholders stressed the importance of holding legislative elections on the established date, there remain significant financial, logistical and coordination challenges for that to happen. In terms of election preparations, I held substantive discussions with the Minister of Territorial Administration and with senior representatives of the Technical Office for Electoral Processes Support and of the National Electoral Commission, who reported advances in the preparation for the elections but were concerned about their slow progress. In that regard, it was noted that some progress had been made on electoral cartography and the preparations for the election budget, although funds were slow to materialize. There remain important technical challenges to address, particularly on the voter registration update, awareness-raising and compliance with the legal electoral process.

Although there is general appreciation of the United Nations and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) support to the electoral process, I was made aware of several areas where differences in approach exist that need to be resolved urgently. Allow

me to highlight four important challenges that were mentioned during my visit: first, managing the limited time available to organize the November elections in line with the Constitution; secondly, the process of updating the voter-registration list in such little time — the process was scheduled to start on 23 August and should last for one month — thirdly, the lack of proper coordination between and among Government entities and UNDP on election-preparation logistics, especially the procurement and sourcing of sufficient voter-registration kits and the conduct of the voter-registration exercise itself — for example, I was informed that the Government has started its own bidding process for the registration kits, in parallel with the UNDP efforts, and that the Government has sought bilateral assistance to obtain the election kits from international partners; and, fourthly, the financial questions. The budget for the elections was assessed by UNDP at $7.7 million, of which the Government of Guinea-Bissau contributed $2 million. Additional contributions have reduced the funding gap to $1.2 million. As mentioned earlier today by Special Representative of the Secretary-General José Viegas Filho, that gap may have been closed following pledges by several international partners. However, I was informed in Bissau that none of the contributions pledged are likely to be disbursed before September, which means that there is an urgent need to cover the costs of the voter-registration operation, if it is to start now.

On 23 August, Prime Minister Gomes held a ceremony in Guinea-Bissau to launch the update of the voter-registration list. However, according to my information, the country has so far received all of the equipment necessary to conduct the process. Allow me to add that the President of the Supreme Court informed me that, although the organization of the November elections in the compressed period should be done by political agreement, there is a risk that, if such consensus is lost, the legitimacy of the whole process could be called into question. The situation could also worsen if the current Government were to be dismissed. I must stress that, ultimately, the organization of the elections is contingent upon the willingness of key political actors to engage in mutual cooperation.

In my meeting with Prime Minister Gomes, whom I would like to thank for welcoming me and supporting my visit, he highlighted the importance of avoiding the recurring situation witnessed in Guinea-Bissau. As mentioned by many other interlocutors, generally peaceful elections are followed by political problems. The Prime Minister expressed his strong commitment to facilitating a stability pact. I was informed that the Government already has a draft framework document that could form the basis for a comprehensive pact. Some of my interlocutors also underscored the importance of enabling civil society and other actors to submit their contributions to the pact.

With regard to reconciliation, the organizing commission for a national conference presented me with its report — "In the Name of Peace" — with the findings and recommendations of consultations conducted with more than 3,000 Bissau-Guineans on the causes of conflict and instability in the country. Representatives of the Women's Council stated that their organization had evolved from the former women's facilitation group and was currently engaged in monitoring the preparations for the upcoming legislative elections and advocating the adoption of a gender quota law. Following my visit, we received positive news that, on 2 August, the National Assembly passed a gender parity, or quotas law, mandating a minimum of 36 per cent women candidates in the legislative and local Government elections.

The military continues to maintain its distance from the political crisis and to respect constitutional order, while the police force continues their efforts to maintain public order and respect human rights. Those are commitments we should encourage to be maintained. Stakeholders acknowledged the key role that the Econopmic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB) continues to play in that context and urged ECOMIB and UNIOGBIS to continue providing support during the electoral cycles. There is also support for the need to reform the defence and security sectors and for continued UNIOGBIS and international community assistance to monitor and provide technical assistance in the post-election period.

Before concluding, allow me to make some comments on the importance of the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). Over the years, the PBF has assumed a strategic position in Guinea-Bissau. Currently, UNIOGBIS and the United Nations country team are implementing PBF projects with a combined budget of $7 million, which are mutually reinforcing to political engagement. In that regard, allow me to underline that two important civil society initiatives, whose representatives I met with in Bissau — the Women's Council and the organizing

commission for the national conference — are both beneficiaries of the PBF.

I convened a meeting of the Guinea-Bissau configuration on 13 August to present my report to the PBC, at which we also received updates from a number of briefers, including Mr. José Viegas Filho, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNIOGBIS. On that occasion, Ambassador Tijjani Muhammad-Bande of Nigeria, in his capacity as Chairperson of ECOWAS, also made some remarks about its most recent summit, held in Lomé on 31 July. Ambassador José Luis Fialho Rocha of Cabo Verde, as pro tempore President of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, informed us about the recent decisions taken during the CPLP summit held in Santa Maria, Cabo Verde, last July. He underlined that the Heads of State and Government expressed their support for the ongoing electoral process in Guinea-Bissau and the holding of legislative elections on 18 November, as well as their readiness to contribute materially to its realization. They also called for the solidarity of the international community to ensure the timely implementation of the contributions already announced. On that occasion, we also briefly discussed the visit of the mission of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union to Guinea-Bissau on 27 and 28 July, under the chairmanship of Togo.

Following the discussions that took place on 13 August, I would like to make the following recommendations. I welcome the visit to Guinea-Bissau by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. I would also like to take note of the final communiqué of the fifty-third ordinary session of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, held in Lomé on 31 July, and take note of its conclusions and recommendations, especially its urging of respect for the date of 18 November for the holding of legislative elections. I also take note of the decision to lift the sanctions imposed by ECOWAS on certain political actors in Guinea-Bissau. I take note of the decisions regarding the country that were approved by the CPLP summit in Santa Maria. I would like to welcome the approval of the gender quota law and the discussions on an inclusive stability pact.

The Guinea-Bissau configuration of the PBC will continue to focus on the implementation of the Conakry Agreement and the preparations for the November elections. We will work with all international partners to that end. ECOMIB and UNIOGBIS have an important role to play in these crucial Guinea-Bissau electoral cycles. We will continue to work closely with Special Representative of the Secretary-General Filho to ensure that the upcoming legislative elections are held according to the constitutional framework and in a credible and fair manner. It is necessary to once again reiterate the importance of holding the upcoming elections on the date set, as a conclusion to the transition towards stability. In that regard, we will continue to be active in mobilizing the resources required for the elections to take place as scheduled. We will also support the United Nations and the international community, in consultation with the Government, in considering ways to strengthen State institutions, especially the justice system. I would like to reaffirm that Guinea-Bissau remains an important example of a sustaining peace approach that offers useful lessons on global partnerships for peacebuilding.

Finally, allow me to inform members of the Council that tomorrow I will host a high-level meeting of the Guinea-Bissau configuration with Prime Minister Aristides Gomes, upon his request. That will be an opportunity for the Prime Minister to have a direct and interactive dialogue with members of the PBC.

The President: I thank Ambassador Vieira for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Tavares Pinto.

Ms. Tavares Pinto (*spoke in French*): It is a great honour and pleasure for me to be here today with the Security Council to represent the Women, Peace and Security Network of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Guinea-Bissau. I am particularly honoured to speak at a meeting with my compatriot and Prime Minister, Mr. Aristides Gomes, as well as the representatives of Guinea-Bissau to the United Nations.

Allow me to speak as a citizen and a woman leader in Guinea-Bissau. I thank the speakers who preceded me. I would like to focus my statement on aspects that are specific to women and the role they play in civil society in Guinea-Bissau.

The participation of women and girls is an integral part of the development goals in the particular context of Guinea-Bissau. The historic aspirations and the progress achieved in recent years are especially deserving of recognition in terms of the participation of women. Throughout the history of the country,

women have shown their clear ability to be politically involved, build peace and defend their rights, especially in terms of economic and social development and social cohesion. However, the recurring political and governmental instability have posed an obstacle to the adoption and implementation of necessary and urgent public policies, which have kept women from fully enjoying their rights, especially their civil, political, economic and social rights.

The situation in Guinea-Bissau remains fragile. The socioeconomic conditions are increasingly challenging and are exacerbated by instability, which in turn is having a significant cumulative impact on young people, who are facing an increasing lack of education and employment opportunities and are subjected to the risks of clandestine migration and drug trafficking. Above all, that has an impact on women and girls, who are fighting on a daily basis to support their households and families during such difficult times in an environment that has deteriorated socially, culturally and in terms of intercommunal social cohesion.

My organization continues to play a very important role through the activism of its women members to ease the tensions of the conflict and promote peace in our country. Our objective is to coordinate and optimize women's role and initiatives in prevention, post-conflict rebuilding and the promotion of human rights. We are a regional network that also works to promote gender equality, good governance and democracy. It is made up of a variety of women's organizations fighting for a definitive, lasting peace within our communities while achieving the agenda set out in resolution 1325 (2000).

In 2014, in coordination with civil society and the country's electoral institutions, along with the support of the United Nations system, we actively contributed to the national electoral process by establishing elections monitoring cells to resolve any conflict situations during elections. It was a platform made up of women's organizations that worked towards avoiding and resolving any problems on the ground during the presidential elections with the use of an early-warning system. The unit was made up of 200 women and youth monitors throughout the country, as well 45 other young people who monitored violence and sent real-time text messages on the situation. The groups worked to simultaneously harmonize mediation efforts in order to avoid tensions before, during, and after elections once the results were published. Awareness-raising and civic education campaigns on electoral processes were also carried out to complement those efforts. The results achieved were satisfactory. There was equal access for all candidates to State media, while effective and qualitative involvement by civil society encouraging all parties to work in a climate of trust, solidarity and security led to elections that were deemed to be free, fair and transparent. The role of women was thus shown to be key in the elections. But those efforts did not come to an end in 2014, nor are they limited to the domain of elections.

In all of the political and institutional crises of the country, our organization has encouraged various dialogue initiatives. We participated in the establishment of a group of women facilitators for dialogue among parties in conflict, which made a major contribution in overcoming the 2017 crisis. That group led to the creation of the national women's council of Guinea-Bissau — a broad and inclusive group that is fully representative of the political, religious, ethnic and territorial diversity throughout the different communities of the country and the diaspora.

For the first time we can today say that civil society — with the essential and decisive support of women and the recognition of the United Nations and ongoing support, especially from the Embassy of Canada — has been able to come together with the political parties in conflict, religious organizations, universities, youth organizations and traditional leaders to reflect on and discuss the quest for a solution to the political crisis. The stakeholders decided to create an alliance of civil society organizations in order to follow up on the political dialogue to break out of the impasse in which the Government is stuck. That platform made it possible for us to make a series of recommendations, which are the basis for a draft political and social stability pact. The process is under way. We hope that the pact will be signed by all stakeholders within a new social and cultural development framework as the basis of a new social contract.

At the same time, given the upcoming holding of elections scheduled for 18 November, drawing on our experience in 2014, and moving forward the electoral process, a platform of women and young people was chosen for moving forward the electoral process with the financial support of the Peacebuilding Fund and the technical support of the United Nations. The process will facilitate registering voters, a civic education campaign, media coverage, the electoral campaign and

monitoring possible outbreaks of violence during the electoral process, as well as on election day.

Lastly, I would like to cite as a positive example concerning women, as we are all fully committed together to dialogue with other actors and partners, the recent adoption by the legislature of a gender parity bill to ensure that 36 per cent quota of women on the ballot. That was one of the outcomes achieved through the struggle and the advocacy of the political platform of women that will lead to considerably positive change for Guinea-Bissau, once full and viable stability has been achieved and sustainably ensured.

With a view towards ensuring a more effective partnership between the United Nations and Guinea-Bissau, the goal of which is to build a reconciled, fair and just society, we propose the following recommendations. The United Nations system in Guinea-Bissau should prioritize work geared towards achieving political stabilization by encouraging inclusive national dialogue that will allow for the adoption, monitoring and implementation of a national stability pact. The United Nations system should be more present on the front line to further to give incentive to partnerships so that international assistance can be more effective in implementing national policies. Cooperation networks linking women's and women's youth organizations, with the goal of encouraging and bolstering the civic and political participation of those organizations, must continue to be supported, as well as establishing and energizing a women's monitoring body to assess and publish data on their progress so as to achieve gender equality through partnerships with national research institutions and the latter's international counterparts.

The President: I thank Ms. Tavares Pinto for her briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Mr. Adom (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation welcomes the presence among us of His Excellency Mr. Aristides Gomes, Prime Minister of Guinea-Bissau, and thanks Mr. José Viegas Filho, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS); His Excellency Mr. Anatolio Ndong Mba, Permanent Representative of Equatorial Guinea, in his capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2048 (2012), concerning Guinea-Bissau; and His Excellency Mr. Mauro Vieira, Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, for their excellent briefings. My delegation would also like to express to Ms. Elisa Maria Tavares Pinto, as a representative of Bissau-Guinean civil society, its interest in everything that she has said during our exchange.

Recent developments in the sociopolitical situation in Guinea-Bissau, especially since the positive progress noted in the wake of the extraordinary session of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), on 14 April in Lomé, give reason for hope in the process of exiting the country's crisis. The appointment of a consensus Prime Minister, the establishment of an inclusive Government, the resumption of National Assembly activities and setting the date for legislative elections on 18 November are all achievements that need to be consolidated through both the sustained support of the international community and the firm political will of the Bissau-Guinean political actors. With a view to helping end the political impasse in Guinea-Bissau, the Security Council ,via the adoption of resolution 2404 (2018) on 28 February, conferred upon UNOGBIS three priority support tasks, namely, the full implementation of the Conakry Agreement, the holding of legislative elections and the review of the country's Constitution. In the light of the report (S/2018/771) of the Secretary-General on the status of the implementation of those priorities, my delegation would like to make the following observations.

With regard to the full implementation of the Conakry Agreement, the Secretary-General's report clearly outlines the measures to be taken by national stakeholders so as to move forward the implementation of the ECOWAS road map and the Conakry Agreement. In that regard, Côte d'Ivoire calls on the various parties to pool their efforts so as to achieve the signing of the stability pact, which remains an important step towards bringing about peace in the country. My delegation firmly encourages national stakeholders to pursue consultations and focus on the benefits of achieving the other aspects of the Agreement. We urge UNOGBIS to continue the use of its good offices and to provide technical support to further engage other organizations, as well as civil society, in the process of ending the crisis. In that regard, my country echoes the Secretary-General's encouragement to ECOWAS to continue its

work towards maintaining a constructive dialogue among national actors.

Along those lines, my delegation welcomes the ECOWAS decision to lift the sanctions imposed on certain Bissau-Guinean political actors following the holding of the fifty third ordinary session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government on 31 July in Lomé. That decision will undoubtedly contribute to de-escalating the local political environment, thereby enhancing conditions for a constructive dialogue among stakeholders. Côte d'Ivoire reaffirms the central role of the Conakry Agreement, which remains to this day the consensual framework of reference for achieving a lasting solution to the political stalemate in Guinea-Bissau.

With regard to the holding of the legislative elections, it seems crucial to take all the necessary steps to achieve the organization of free, peaceful and credible polls. As the Secretary-General's report emphasizes, the legislative and presidential elections remain at the core of the country's political life. In that connection, they must be held in accordance with the Constitution and national laws and norms. Despite delays involving practical aspects of the elections, national actors, supported by the international community, are working on completing technical preparations for the legislative elections to prevent any chance of postponement.

Accordingly, Côte d'Ivoire commends the perfectly coordinated work done on the ground by the group of five international partners — the Security Council, the United Nations, ECOWAS, the African Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries and the European Union — particularly with regard to mustering financial resources, which is a real source of concern. To that end, my delegation is pleased to note the contributions of ECOWAS and the West African Economic and Monetary Union of $2 million and $1 million, respectively, which will help to fill the financial gap in the electoral assistance project. Côte d'Ivoire would like to take this opportunity to urge countries and organizations to fulfil their pledges.

The review of the Constitution, the third priority entrusted to the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office, remains an important pillar insofar as it will enable the establishment of a new political order that will promote the consolidation of peace in Guinea-Bissau. In that regard, my delegation encourages UNIOGBIS to take whatever measures it deems necessary to provide effective support to the Guinea-Bissau authorities in implementing an inclusive institutional framework that will lay the foundations for a country that is at peace and firmly on the path to development.

The fight against transnational crime, in particular drug-trafficking and money-laundering, represents a major challenge for the authorities of Guinea-Bissau. In this regard, and pursuant to the provisions of resolution 2404 (2018), the joint measures taken by UNIOGBIS and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in this area should be continued and intensified with a view to suppressing drug-trafficking rings and those who long for a return to instability in a country that has already suffered too much. We welcome the fact that President José Mário Vaz and the national authorities as a whole are resolutely committed to this path, having requesting the support of UNODC and UNIOGBIS in designing and implementing a national plan to combat transnational organized crime. We also welcome the efforts of the country's politic l class to adopt a law establishing a 36 per cent quota for women in legislative and local elections and the creation in April 2018 of a Guinea-Bissau council of women.

The major changes afoot in Guinea-Bissau call for adapting international organizations and structures on the ground so that their action can be more effective. That is why my country awaits with great interest the conclusions of the assessment mission conducted in this regard, as well as proposals for restructuring UNIOGBIS. Nonetheless, we must bear in mind that any significant positive developments in Guinea-Bissau during this time still depend on the proper organization and conduct of elections, whose results will determine the nature and scope of the change to be made. Cote d'Ivoire commends the action taken by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and would like to assure him of our full support in this important task. We also take this opportunity to recall the paramount importance of ensuring that Bissau-Guinean stakeholders take firm ownership of the process for emerging from crisis and prioritize the greater good of the country and its people.

In conclusion, I would like to underscore that in the next few days Cote d'Ivoire intends to submit a draft press statement on the situation in Guinea-Bissau to the Security Council.

Mrs. Gueguen (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the briefers for their comprehensive statements. I also welcome the presence in the Chamber today of Prime Minister Aristides Gomes of Guinea-Bissau, and thank him for making the journey to New York to participate in our work, which is a very positive signal.

I have five brief comments. First, France welcomes the positive developments in recent months in Guinea-Bissau, including the appointment of Mr. Aristides Gomes as a consensus Prime Minister in a first important step towards the implementation of the Conakry Agreement, which we continue to believe is the only way to bring the country out of its long political and institutional crisis. I would also like to welcome the central role played by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and more generally by the group of five international partners — ECOWAS, the African Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, the European Union and the United Nations — in achieving those results. It will be crucial to ensure that Guinea-Bissau continues to benefit from strong regional and international support in the months and years to come, and that is a particular responsibility of the Security Council.

Secondly, while encouraging progress has been made over recent months, we expect to see further significant measures over the next few weeks — first and foremost, the holding of elections in November in accordance with the announced schedule. In our view that will be a significant test of the genuine will of the various stakeholders to make progress towards the full implementation of the Conakry Agreement. We expect the Guinea-Bissau authorities to fully engage in the technical preparations for the elections, including voter registration, for which the necessary resources must be made available as soon as possible and the funds allocated for it in the national budget disbursed without delay.

Thirdly, the international community must play its full part in supporting the upcoming electoral process, whether through the provision of financial aid by leading donors or technical assistance by the United Nations Development Programme and the European Union. We have equally high expectations of the Guinea-Bissau authorities. The proper holding of the forthcoming elections is also a prerequisite for any potential lifting of sanctions. In that regard I want to welcome the position of non-interference in political affairs taken by the military authorities in Guinea-Bissau.

Fourthly, in the medium term, lasting peace and stability in Guinea-Bissau will be re-established through progress in other areas, such as the review of the Constitution, which should enable the Bissau-Guinean institutional system to avoid the impasses we have seen in recent months. Those areas also include the fight against organized crime, particularly drug-trafficking — which will not only require resolute commitment from the Guinea-Bissau authorities but also sustained support from the international community, especially the various United Nations actors on the ground — as well as security sector reform, without which there can be no long-term stability in the country, as recent history has shown.

My fifth and last point is that France fully supports the strategic review of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau that has begun under the leadership of former Special Representative Mr. João Honwana. We hope the process will be guided by an unrestricted and objective evaluation of the situation and the needs on the ground independent of the positions that the various stakeholders have expressed on the issue in the past few months. We view this as a useful opportunity to reflect on how to strengthen the scope of the good-offices role of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, improve coordination among the various international community actors on the ground and provide the most effective possible technical support, which Guinea-Bissau needs more than ever.

It is still too early to say whether Guinea-Bissau is safely on the path to long-term stability. The next few months, and the legislative elections of November in particular, will supply more answers to our questions in that regard. The supportive role played by the region and, more broadly, by the international community and the Security Council, is all the more important in this decisive period.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset, we would like to welcome the presence here with us today of Prime Minister Aristide Gomes of Guinea-Bissau. We would also like to congratulate Mr. José Viegas Filho, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), on his appointment to this important role. We wish him every success in his work and thank him for his briefing.

We have listened carefully to the information shared with us today by Ambassador Anatolio Ndong Mba, Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2048 (2012) concerning Guinea-Bissau, Ambassador Mauro Vieira, Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, and Ms. Tavares Pinto.

We note the significant progress that has been made in helping Guinea-Bissau to emerge from its political crisis following the decision by President José Mário Vaz to appoint a new Prime Minister and form a consensus Government. We encourage all the political forces in the country, despite their ongoing disagreements, to work with the Cabinet to achieve a sustainable settlement.

We support the work of the country's leaders to prepare for the elections planned for November. We are pleased that the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau is making a significant contribution to supporting the electoral processes, including by mobilizing means from international partners. We support the mission's intention to facilitate constitutional reform, as noted in the Secretary-General's report (S/2018/771), and dialogue should begin on that as soon as possible. In that regard, the time between the parliamentary and presidential elections would be very suitable. We continue to believe that this measure is critical from the point of view of resolving the issues around the Guinea-Bissau Constitution and ensuring the prevention of a relapse into political turbulence there.

We are grateful to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for promoting a political settlement in Guinea-Bissau. We note the decision of ECOWAS to remove the sanctions it imposed on Bissau-Guineans in February, which we think is a very timely step. However, we believe that any arrangements for the country's future should be based on the desires of its own citizens, without pressure or the imposition of ready-made solutions from outside. Only through a response to its genuine national interests can they play a positive role in the work of helping the country emerge from its long-standing crisis.

Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren (Netherlands): I would first like to thank Special Representative Viegas Filho, Ambassadors Vieira and Ndong Mba and Ms. Tavares Pinto for their insightful briefings on the recent developments in Guinea-Bissau. I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome Prime Minister Gomes to today's important meeting.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands would like to underscore the following three points. The first is the importance of the full implementation of the Conakry Agreement, particularly regarding the holding of legislative elections on 18 November and the signing of a stability pact. The second is the importance of the inclusion of women in political processes, as highlighted by Ms. Tavares Pinto, and the third is the importance of the continued engagement of the Economic Community of West African States Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB).

Let me start by reiterating that the full implementation of the Conakry Agreement and the six-point road map is the only way forward in Guinea-Bissau. As so many people highlighted yesterday, prevention should be our priority, and implementing and abiding by agreements like this one are important steps towards sustainable peace in Guinea-Bissau. We commend the efforts of the newly formed Government to organize legislative elections and reiterate the necessity of organizing free, fair, credible and inclusive elections on 18 November. While we recognize the positive steps taken in Bissau, we are not there yet.

A draft of the stability pact, which will be the foundation of the national round-table dialogue, has been circulated among political stakeholders. An inclusive stability pact is crucial for Guinea-Bissau, laying the foundation for collaboration among the various actors and paving the way for equally important constitutional reform. We therefore urge all the relevant stakeholders to finalize it as soon as possible and before the legislative elections in November.

As stipulated in resolution 1325 (2000) and the sustaining peace agenda, the role of women in peacebuilding cannot be overestimated. As Ms. Tavares Pinto indicated, women have played an extremely important part in breaking through the political impasse in Guinea-Bissau. I also want to reiterate the importance of women's continued engagement both in the upcoming elections and in the country's future political life. In that regard, we want to welcome the establishment of the Bissau-Guinean Council of Women and to request that the Government of Guinea-Bissau, the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau and the other international actors on the ground — the African Union, the Economic Community

of West African States (ECOWAS), the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries and the European Union — continue to collaborate with that new body to ensure women's full and equal participation in Guinea-Bissau.

Lastly, I would like to highlight the important role that ECOWAS has played in Guinea-Bissau, especially through the presence of ECOMIB, which is essential to Guinea-Bissau's stability, and while expressing our appreciation we also express the hope that ECOWAS extends its mandate at least until the end of the presidential elections. A longer-term extension of its mandate will give the Bissau-Guinean population security and help to ensure the holding of elections, both in November of this year and in 2019, when presidential elections are scheduled.

Guinea-Bissau is at an important crossroads in its history. Its stability depends largely on the organization of free, fair, credible and inclusive legislative elections on 18 November. They are the next step in resolving the country's lingering political impasse. It is the Council's responsibility to continue to support Guinea-Bissau at this important time, and we look forward to its continued active engagement.

Mr. Hunter (United States of America): I thank all the briefers for their remarks today. We also welcome Prime Minister Gomes and express our appreciation for his ongoing efforts to foster unity in the Government and prepare for critical elections in November.

The United States is pleased to note the welcome political progress in Guinea-Bissau since April. We commend the political leaders for taking much-needed and long-delayed steps aimed at breaking through a nearly three-year stalemate to get the Government moving again for the well-being of the people of Guinea-Bissau, and encourage them to continue to implement the Conakry Agreement and pursue critical reforms.

Next on Guinea-Bissau's political horizon, we look forward to successful voter registration and free, fair and transparent legislative elections in November. We encourage the international community and Guinea-Bissau's partners in the region to support the Government's efforts to prepare for and execute these elections. We also commend the generous contributions of the Economic Community of West African States to that effort and express our gratitude for its continued leadership as a mediator.

Even with this welcome progress and upcoming elections, the Security Council must remain vigilant, since the consensus agreements that helped to ease the political crisis remain fragile. The United States shares the Secretary-General's concerns about the continued threat that drug trafficking and transnational organized crime pose to Guinea-Bissau and the broader subregion. We welcome the support of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for the Government's reactivation of the transnational crime unit and encourage UNODC to continue to build its capacity in the country.

We also salute the efforts of civil society and concerned citizens to encourage transparency in governance and a culture of respect for human rights in the country. We are encouraged by the ongoing expanding efforts of the Bissau-Guinean Council of Women, in particular its drive for inclusion in the development of the stability pact called for in the Conakry Agreement.

Only a few months remain before critical elections that could solidify the political progress made so far this year. The steps taken to fix the wrongs of so many wasted months of gridlock have been bold and important, but the road to enduring success is long. We will continue to work with the Government as it emerges from this frustrating stall and strives to achieve security and opportunity for all of its country's citizens.

Mr. Orrenius Skau (Sweden): I would like to begin by acknowledging the presence of Prime Minister Aristides Gomes here today. Sweden has a long-standing relationship with the people of Guinea-Bissau dating back even before its independence. It is in that spirit of close partnership that we are now engaging in support for Guinea-Bissau in the Council.

I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for his briefing. The mission has a crucial role to play in the coordination of international efforts in support of Guinea-Bissau, not least now in support of the preparations for elections. I also thank the Ambassador Mauro Vieira of Brazil, Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission. We appreciate the opportunity to draw on the Peacebuilding Commission's strategic advice on Guinea-Bissau.

As has been highlighted today, Guinea-Bissau has seen a number of positive developments over the past

few months. We once again welcome the consensus appointment of a Prime Minister, the formation of an inclusive Government and the reopening of the National Assembly. The recent approvals of the new Government programme and national budget are also positive steps. We welcome the military's neutrality and its posture of non-interference in the political process, and we stress the importance of its continued neutrality moving forward.

The sense of optimism that Ambassador Vieira alluded to in his briefing is encouraging. The elections on 18 November will be a crucial step towards building trust and stability. The ongoing challenges must now be addressed to ensure credible and timely elections within the agreed time frame. We stress the importance of ensuring women and men's equal participation in the upcoming elections both as voters and candidates, and we welcome the adoption of a gender quota law. We encourage the country's leadership to follow up the law with targeted efforts to include women's participation in the political processes at all levels. In that regard, I also welcome the briefing by Ms. Tavares Pinto this morning.

The six-point road map and the Conakry Agreement must be implemented in full. In that regard we take note of the draft framework document for the stability pact that has been developed by the Government. For the pact to be credible and sustainable, we underscore the importance of ensuring that it is underpinned by an inclusive and consultative process.

Guinea-Bissau now needs concerted and coherent international support for the electoral process. It will be important to make full use of the good offices of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in preparing for the elections. We commend the efforts of the Economic Community of West African States, which has played an essential role on behalf of the region in finding a solution to the political crisis, and we encourage its continued engagement, especially in the electoral process.

As is often discussed in the Peacebuilding Commission, for a sustainable peace to be truly consolidated, it is always important to address the root causes, including by focusing on constitutional reform, reconciliation, strengthening the rule of law through strong and inclusive institutions, assuring equal access to economic opportunities and respecting, protecting and ensuring human rights. Such reforms will be critical drivers of peace. The international community, in close partnership with the region, should now step up its efforts to support Guinea-Bissau on its path to sustainable peace and development.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): I would like to welcome His Excellency Mr. Aristides Gomes, Prime Minister of Guinea-Bissau, to the Council today, and to thank our briefers, Special Representative Filho, Ambassadors Vieira and Ndong Mba and Ms. Tavares Pinto, for their valuable remarks.

More than three months ago, in mid-May, we commended the encouraging progress achieved towards a solution to the country's political and institutional stalemate (see S/PV.8261). The appointment of an inclusive Government, the reopening of the National Assembly, the election of the President of the National Electoral Commission and the announcement of legislative elections for November sparked optimism about the prospects for a new degree of resolve and normalization. Against that backdrop, the reported delays and lack of concrete measures taken to prepare for the legislative elections raise concern. The timely and credible conduct of the legislative and presidential elections represents a crucial step towards the resumption of peacebuilding and an important element of the Conakry Agreement. I would also like to express our concern about the lack of a substantial review of the Constitution and electoral law. However, we are hopeful about the possibility of progress with the recent announcement of the stability pact consultation, focusing on security reforms and the judiciary.

We therefore call on the Guinea-Bissau authorities to provide firm political direction and assume the leadership of the electoral process, and to step up the required technical preparation and empower the electoral management bodies to implement appropriate efforts to ensure timely and credible elections. Avoiding a new impasse over post-electoral power-sharing will be essential to ensuring stability in the long term.

We commend the adoption of a new law introducing a minimum 36 per cent quota for women's representation in elections and appointments to the National Assembly and local governing bodies. We also welcome the creation of the Bissau-Guinean Council of Women, which aims to promote women's participation in national peacebuilding, reconciliation and political processes. Those measures can help to lay the foundations for a more equal, participatory and

modern society capable of facing its new challenges in development, modernization and growth.

However, we remain concerned about the fact that drug-trafficking and transnational organized crime still represent a serious threat to peace and stability in Guinea-Bissau, the subregion and beyond. In that regard, we call on the country's political leaders and State institutions to take meaningful steps, in cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and other relevant agencies, to prevent and reduce these issues, which could cripple political progress and development for years to come.

With regard to the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2048 (2012) concerning Guinea-Bissau, we share the view of the Chair of the Committee that any deliberations about the existing sanctions should not interfere with the present electoral process.

Last but not least, I would like to express our full support to Mr. José Viegas Filho, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the staff of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau and the United Nations country team for their dedication.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): I commend Special Representative Filho, Ambassador Ndong Mba and Ambassador Vieira for their insightful briefings on the most recent developments in Guinea-Bissau and their tireless efforts to bring peace and stability to the country. I thank Ms. Tavares Pinto for highlighting the role of civil-society organizations and women's groups in facilitating a dialogue between the main political actors. I also warmly welcome the presence of Prime Minister Gomes at this meeting. We endorse the Secretary-General's semi-annual report (S/2018/771) and would like to follow up with some observations.

We welcome the encouraging steps taken by all parties to end the protracted political stalemate in Guinea-Bissau, including the approval of the Government programme and the adoption of a budget. We greatly appreciate the good offices of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) and the mediation efforts of the Economic Community of West African States, whose collective efforts have led to those positive developments.

There is now a need for expeditious preparations for the upcoming legislative and presidential elections. We welcome the commitments by international partners to providing the necessary technical, logistical and financial support for the electoral process and call on the Government of Guinea-Bissau to make progress on the measures needed for the timely, credible and fair conduct of the elections. We also call on all parties to promptly take the necessary steps to implement the remaining provisions of the Conakry Agreement, including the adoption of a stability pact and constitutional review. Political stability can be achieved only through the continuing implementation of political reforms aimed at strengthening governing bodies, and in order to develop guiding principles for those reforms the country needs an open and inclusive nationwide dialogue.

In addition to that, we need to work on establishing the most effective possible measures for ensuring the country's stability and resilience through increased support to existing development plans and the United Nations peacebuilding plan, with a special focus on education and health care. Ensuring the participation of women and young people at every stage and level of the political process is equally important. We call on all donors to provide the necessary funds for implementing all such measures.

Another matter of concern for all of us remains the perils of drug-trafficking and transnational organized crime, with their multidimensional impact on the economy, overall security and community and individual well-being. National engagement is critical to implementing the various international programmes and projects aimed at strengthening the security, judicial and law-enforcement sectors. We therefore call on the Guinea-Bissau authorities to continue strengthening the country's national institutional framework and response to these perilous threats, in close cooperation with UNIOGBIS, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and INTERPOL.

In conclusion, we would like to extend our full support to the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and reaffirm our readiness to cooperate closely with all the relevant parties to support the peacebuilding and consolidation efforts in Guinea-Bissau.

Mr. Tenya (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the convening of today's meeting and appreciate the briefings by Special Representative José Viegas Filho, Ambassadors Anatolio Ndong Mba and Mauro Vieira, and Ms. Tavares Pinto. We would like to welcome

His Excellency Mr. Aristides Gomes, Prime Minister of Guinea-Bissau, and to take the opportunity of his presence here to highlight the political progress that has been made in recent months in Guinea-Bissau. We welcome his appointment by consensus, the formation of an inclusive Government, the reopening of the National Assembly and the establishment of the date of 18 November for holding legislative elections.

We believe that those developments are encouraging and should make it possible to move forward with the full implementation of the Conakry Agreement and the Guinea-Bissau six-point road map, established to resolve the political crisis in the country. We would also like to take advantage of this meeting to emphasize three specific aspects where we believe we must redouble our efforts in order to consolidate the progress that has been made and achieve a sustainable peace in Guinea-Bissau.

The first is the holding of legislative elections in November. Establishing a free, transparent and inclusive electoral process will help to ensure the normal conduct of the 2019 presidential elections. That involves promoting a democratic climate and ensuring the broad participation of citizens, particularly women and young people, and of all the country's political forces. It will be essential to take special care of the technical, logistical and financial aspects of organizing the elections. We welcome the support provided by the United Nations Development Programme in that regard, and we note the importance of ensuring that the international community continues to cooperate with the process.

My second point is about the fight against organized crime. As the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and several of my colleagues who spoke before me have already made clear, we are concerned about the presence in the country of transnational organizations involved in illicit activities, in particular the increase in activities such as drug trafficking that undermine the social fabric and the institutions required to build a sustainable peace. We appreciate the work being done by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in Guinea-Bissau, together with the United Nations Integrated Office for the Consolidation of Peace in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), to overcome those challenges, including the reactivation of the Transnational Crime Unit.

Third is comprehensive attention to the root causes of the conflict. In that regard, we believe that in the future it will be essential, first and foremost, to work to strengthen the rule of law and establish inclusive democratic institutions in Guinea-Bissau, as well as to promote national reconciliation and sustainable development. It is also crucial that the various efforts, initiatives and mechanisms deployed in the field can maintain political and operational coherence, reflecting and responding to the needs and priorities of all sectors of the population. To that end, increasing the involvement of women and young people in the political life of the country is vital. In that regard, we would like to welcome the establishment of the Bissau-Guinean Council of Women, which seeks to improve the participation of women in peacebuilding, reconciliation and the political processes at the national level.

In conclusion, I would like to underline the importance of maintaining and strengthening the support and assistance of international and regional communities in these efforts. We particularly want to highlight the coordination between the Peacebuilding Commission and UNIOGBIS, as well as the involvement of the Economic Community of West African States, the African Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries and the European Union, among others.

Ms. Guadey (Ethiopia): I would first like to welcome His Excellency Mr. Aristides Gomes, Prime Minister of Guinea-Bissau, as well as to join other speakers in congratulating Special Representative José Viegas Filho on his appointment as Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) and assuring him of our full support in discharging his responsibilities. We would also like to thank him for his briefing on the situation in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of UNIOGBIS over the past six months. We believe that the mission should be provided with all the support it needs to carry out its mandate effectively.

We would like to thank Ambassador Mauro Vieira, Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, and Ambassador Antolio Ndong Mba, Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2048 (2012), for their useful briefings on the basis of their engagement with various stakeholders during their recent visit to Guinea-Bissau. We also thank Ms. Elisa Tavares Pinto and all the Bissau-Guinean women for their important advocacy work for peace.

We welcome the progress made in resolving the political and institutional crisis in Guinea-Bissau and commend the country's political stakeholders for implementing the 2016 Conakry Agreement and demonstrating their commitment to respecting the country's Constitution. The adoption of a new Government programme and State budget is a step in the right direction towards ending the negative impact of the political crisis on the people of Guinea-Bissau. Nevertheless, we also recognize the challenges that must be addressed in terms of tackling the root causes of Guinea-Bissau's problems, and the fact that the situation in the country still remains fragile, thereby emphasizing the importance of sustaining the recent gains. The Bissau-Guinean stakeholders should continue to act in unity. The current developments in the country should be followed closely, and we take note of the report of the Secretary-General and its recommendations (S/2018/771). We also appreciate the briefing by Ambassador Anatolio Ndong Mba on the outcome of his recent visit, which sent a very good message about the Council's active and continued engagement.

The holding of timely and credible legislative and presidential elections in accordance with the Constitution and the national law of Guinea-Bissau is crucial to consolidating sustainable peace and national reconciliation. We underline the need to provide assistance to strengthen the capacity and independence of key institutions in order to support the electoral process. In that context, we commend UNIOGBIS for extending capacity-building programmes to Guinea-Bissau's security, law-enforcement and defence institutions.

The increasing threat caused by transnational organized crime and drug trafficking is a matter of serious concern that undermines the peace and stability of the country. In that regard, we stress the need for the concerted efforts of the relevant bodies at the national, regional and international levels in order to address the challenge.

Finally, we appreciate the continued support and engagement of the Economic Community of West African States, the African Union, the European Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries and all the other international partners working to find a lasting solution to the crisis in Guinea-Bissau. Their coordinated role remains vital to ensuring sustainable peace and development in the country.

Mr. Albanai (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to welcome the presence of His Excellency Mr. Aristides Gomes, Prime Minister of Guinea-Bissau. I congratulate him on taking office and wish him every success in stabilizing his friendly country. I would also like to welcome Mr. José Viegas Filho, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau, who is here with us in the Security Council for the first time. I wish him success in his tasks, especially at this critical moment of the country's history, and we support him fully. I also thank him for his valuable briefing.

I thank as well Ambassador Anatolio Ndong Mba, Ambassador Mauro Vieira and Ms. Elisa Maria Tavares Pinto for their informative briefings.

Today, I would like to focus in my statement on three issues: the political situation, the upcoming elections, and transnational organized crime and drug trafficking.

First, we reiterate our welcome of the effective steps taken by all relevant parties to make progress on implementing the first three demands of the Conakry Agreement. However, we believe that there is still room for more progress. We urge all parties concerned to cooperate and implement the remaining provisions of the Agreement in the coming period, especially the necessary reforms mentioned therein, including the review of the national Constitution. I reiterate my country's support for the decisive efforts of the African Union, the United Nations, the European Union, the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries, and in particular the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which has been continuously engaged in this matter and helped to achieve the progress that we have seen recently.

Secondly, regarding the legislative elections scheduled to be held in November, we share the concerns of the Secretary-General in his most recent report (S/2018/771) regarding the slow implementation of the agreed timetable pertaining to the preparations for the elections. We urge the Government of Guinea-Bissau to step up its efforts to ensure that the elections are held on time and in a transparent and credible manner. My country welcomes the ongoing support provided by the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) to facilitate the preparations for the elections, pursuant to its mandate as set out in resolution 2404 (2018). We welcome the

continued support of international partners to fund the elections, especially the financial support announced by ECOWAS in its final summit communiqué of 31 July.

Thirdly and finally, we are pleased to see the increased efforts of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to prevent drug trafficking and organized crime since the renewal of the UNIOGBIS mandate last February. This matter threatens peace and stability not only in Guinea-Bissau, but also in the region as a whole. In that regard, we call on UNIOGBIS to maintain this approach and to provide the necessary support to all the relevant authorities in the country in order to build local capacity and address this matter.

Mrs. Cordova Soria (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the presence of the Prime Minister of Guinea-Bissau, Mr. Aristides Gomes, and are grateful for the information provided by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. José Viegas Filho; Ambassador Anatolio Ndong Mba, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2048 (2012) concerning Guinea-Bissau; and Ambassador Mauro Vieira of Brazil, in his capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission. We offer special thanks to the representative of civil society, Ms. Elisa Maria Tavares Pinto.

Guinea-Bissau continues to face a range of challenges that must be addressed in the framework of the political process and inclusive dialogue that should enable members of the Government, political parties represented in the National Assembly and civil society in general to continue working towards consensus with a view to constructively implementing the agreements that have been reached. Genuine commitment will be required to reach a lasting social and political solution solely in the best interests of the people of Guinea-Bissau and in strict respect for the country's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

We believe that one of the main structural factors of the crisis, the political impasse, has improved significantly in recent months with the consensus appointment of the Prime Minister and the formation of the Government, demonstrating the crucial role that political will plays in resolving conflicts. In this regard, we believe that the elections to be held this year and next cill be critical. To that end, the commitment of the international community over the short term will therefore be essential as the primary condition with a view to providing relevant and timely financial and technical support to the updating of the registry of voters and strengthening of electoral mechanisms so as to ensure the holding of transparent, inclusive and ultimately peaceful elections.

At the same time, in the context of State stability and security issues, the fight against drug trafficking, transnational crime and impunity must also be priorities. To that end, the United Nations has a key role to play in promoting development, strengthening and upgrading State capacities, and reducing vulnerability to drugs and crime by strengthening the justice sector and police. The international community must provide Guinea-Bissau with the assistance it needs to enhance its control over its coastline and airspace and to train members of the relevant State institutions.

We commend all efforts of the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and its Mission in Guinea-Bissau, and the contributions of the European Union, the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries and the important work of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) to bring the parties to the conflict together and promotie dialogue. We welcome the work carried out by former Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Modibo Touré, as well as that of the current Special Representative and head of UNIOGBIS, Mr. José Viegas Filho, who has made continuous coordination with all levels of the State a priority. In this regard, we believe that the work of UNIOGBIS must be strengthened and focus on initiatives to continue creating opportunities for dialogue and providing technical cooperation in the security sector. We believe that such efforts will contribute to the consolidation of an inclusive Government.

We also commend the work carried out by the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, led by Brazil. We underscore the importance of entrenching the configuration's links with the Security Council in terms of coordination, information exchange and active participation. At the same time, we welcome the initiative of the National Forum of Women and Girls for Peace in Bissau. We believe it essential to incorporate a gender perspective and women's participation into mediation and dialogue.

In conclusion, we reiterate that there can be no development without peace or peace without development. We therefore believe it imperative to

redouble our joint efforts for the stabilization of Guinea-Bissau. We have also reiterated that sustainable peace must be attained through political tools to find negotiated political solutions. In this regard, in order to achieve stability and sustainable peace and Guinea-Bissau, we must ensure the well-being of the population and of the most vulnerable sectors.

Mr. Lie Cheng (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): We welcome the presence with us here today of the Prime Minister of Guinea-Bissau and the statements delivered by the various briefers. We also listened closely to the statement by Ms. Pinto.

We have observed notable progress in Guinea-Bissau over recent months. In implementing the Conakry Agreement, the parties in Guinea Bissau have reached agreement on forming an inclusive Government, reconvening the National Assembly in plenary session, and the date of legislative elections. China welcomes this progress. Regional and subregional organizations, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union, the European Union and the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries, have played a significant role in overcoming the political crisis and helping the parties to engage in dialogue to resolve their differences.

Currently, the situation is largely stable in Guinea-Bissau. Nonetheless, the country faces challenges in its efforts to improve economic and social development, to combat drug trafficking and to make progress on the political process. China calls on international donors and partners in multilateral and bilateral cooperation to continue to support Guinea-Bissau and to build its capacity to improve the lives of the population. We hope that the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, the Peacebuilding Commission, the Guinea-Bissau country team, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and others will provide targeted assistance to Guinea-Bissau based on the country's actual needs.

China has always supported African countries in their efforts to find African solutions to African problems. We call on all parties in Guinea-Bissau to work in the long-term interests of the country by finding consensus and by using dialogue and consultation to overcome differences, seeking the stability and development of the country and striving to improve the lives of the population. China has worked together with the international community, including ECOWAS, to promote dialogue and communication among the different parties in the country and to maintain stability and sustainable development in Guinea-Bissau and West Africa as a whole. That can play a positive role.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United Kingdom.

We are pleased to see the Government under new consensus Prime Minister Gomes, whom we welcome today, now working towards legislative elections on 18 November. Holding free, fair, credible and transparent legislative elections in 2018, in accordance with the Constitution and national laws and commitments, is critical.

Discussions on a stability pact, flowing from the Conakry Agreement, have also started the process of reflection on longer-term reform to the security sector, justice, administration and the Constitution. These will help Guinea-Bissau to achieve political stability and sustainable peace over the longer term. As our civil society briefer made clear, an inclusive approach, particularly including women, will be vital.

The United Kingdom is grateful to the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) for its work in the country, realigning its work to its revised mandate. In particular, we welcome the support of UNIOGBIS for legislative elections and political dialogue.

With regard to sanctions, we are satisfied that targeted sanctions are having the intended impact, limiting the influence of those under sanctions to have a disruptive impact on the Conakry Agreement and providing a disincentive to military entry to politics. The United Kingdom supports the scheduled review of European Union and United Nations sanctions in summer 2019, after the presidential elections.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the Prime Minister of Guinea-Bissau.

Mr. Gomes (Guinea-Bissau) (*spoke in French*): Today's consideration of the Secretary-General's report (S/2018/771) on developments in my country and the activities of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) gives me the opportunity to thank the Council for the special and

sustained attention that it has focused on my country over the past two decades.

Allow me to take this opportunity to also express our deep appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report and for his continued efforts to help ensure peace and political stability in our country. I thank his Special Representative, Ambassador José Viegas Filho, for introducing the report and thank him and his entire team in Bissau for the remarkable work they are doing.

I would also like to express our gratitude to the members and the Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ambassador Mauro Vieira, who recently visited Guinea-Bissau. This was his second visit, which highlights his personal interest in and commitment to stability and progress in our country. We thank him for his encouraging briefing and greatly appreciate his objective and confident view of our country. We also thank Ambassador Anatolio Ndong Mba, Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2048 (2012) concerning Guinea-Bissau, for the work he carried out with total objectivity.

Six months ago, the Security Council engaged in timely and serious consideration about what could or should happen in Guinea-Bissau, given the numerous internal contradictions and the persistence of a political impasse that seemed insurmountable. As the Council knows, the Conakry Agreement, which was to serve as a road map and mark the way out of the crisis, has been difficult to implement, in particular because of the differing, even contradictory, interpretations that have hampered it. As a result, its validity and binding character were called into question beginning the day following its signature, on 14 October 2016, in the capital of the Republic of Guinea, by some of the participants in the negotiations conducted under the auspices of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) mediator, the President of the Republic of Guinea, Mr. Alpha Condé.

I will not rehash the many ups and downs of Guinea-Bissau's recent political history, since the successive reports that have been submited to the Security Council in recent years make ample mention of them. I would rather, if I may, dwell on the organization of the legislative elections that are due to take place on 18 November, that is to say, in less than three months.

A new hope was born in Guinea Bissau following the Lomé agreement of 14 April, thanks to the fruitful impetus of the ECOWAS member countries, whose tireless support and active solidarity I should like to salute here and now. In that regard, I am pleased to highlight the leading and decisive role played by all the Heads of State of the Economic Community of West African States, and thank them for their understanding and for having always been at our side in the search for a consensual and lasting solution to the political crisis in Guinea-Bissau. In particular, I thank Mr. Alpha Condé, President of the Republic of Guinea, and Mr. Faure Gnassingbé, President of the Republic of Togo, for their invaluable and fraternal support in their capacity, respectively, as mediator and outgoing Chair of our subregional organization.

Indeed, thanks in particular to the persistent efforts of ECOWAS and the good will of political parties, civil society and other important actors in Guinea Bissau, the political crisis, which had raged practically uninterrupted since 2014 and made it difficult for Parliament in particular to function fully found a happy outcome, thereby enabling the appointment by the President of the Republic, Mr. José Mário Vaz, of a consensus Prime Minister, whose primary responsibility is to create the necessary conditions for the holding of legislative elections on the scheduled date.

The inclusive Government that I have the honour to lead took office on 26 April. A calendar had already been adopted two months prior to that date. Nevertheless, the Government was able to catch up in the process of organizing elections without cutting any corners.

It is not unusual, after such a long period of crisis in a country as fragile as ours, for it to be difficult and even laborious to quickly restore a climate of trust between political parties and other protagonists in national life. One of our major concerns since we set about carrying out the task entrusted to us has always been to prioritize dialogue. We have decided, whenever possible, to take no major decisions that commit the parties represented in our Government without consulting with them first. Let me stress that ours is a consensus-based and inclusive Government. Indeed, in our current context, it is not advisable to adopt unilateral acts that could upset the balance that we are still trying to establish and that might have a negative impact on the electoral process and, ultimately, on the organization and the success of the elections.

It is true that the holding of elections is essential to political stability in Guinea-Bissau. However, it is also true that Guinea-Bissau has experienced successive political crises for more than two decades, despite its long-standing tradition of success in organizing five different rounds of elections since the establishment of a multiparty political system in the country. In other words, it is entirely legitimate to question the real sources of political instability in my country, which arise on a recurring basis. The correct answers to those questions will lead us to a diagnosis that is likely to provide strategies for all stakeholders to follow in the current crisis with a view to its definitive resolution.

The recurring political crises in Guinea-Bissau involve a number of factors, including the following elements. The collapse of State institutions following the failure of the economic development of our national post-independence project has had a considerable impact on shaping the political crises that we have witnessed to date. That widespread situation is characterized by social and political malaise and has engendered classic survival strategies across all fields to access the fragile State structures of Guinea-Bissau, including enormous vulnerability to transnational and organized crime.

As a result of those crises, the gaps among social groups are growing. Individuals who should in principle make up the elites within the State institutions are instead obliged to be part of an everyone-for-themselves system. That approach to socioeconomic survival is encouraged by some who exploit the institutions by monopolizing them rather than by serving the State. Therefore, we have for years seen a succession of progressive monopolization processes by individuals and groups of individuals, most often organized into political parties. Those political entities end up evolving only around projects of pure and simple predation on our meagre national income. As these resources dwindle, the more fiercely the battles rage among actors who seek to take advantage of the rare sources of financing, which are the ministries, independent funds, State enterprises and projects financed by donors.

While it is true that such political struggles over various sources of State income exist everywhere, we must point out that they have become exacerbated in my country by the following factors: the collapse of an entire system regulating access to State institutions; the total or partial loss of legal and regulatory mechanisms that regulate access to institutional posts; the total or partial absence of rules protecting different professions within State institutions; the loss of the tradition of merit-based promotion, and the collapse of the principle of organization according to which each post must correspond to a well-defined task.

The context of such structural State failure is exacerbated by a Constitution that is not harmonious or sufficiently clear, which makes political governance even more difficult. The Constitution, which should be nothing more than a basic law of provisory political compromise and which was drafted for that purpose at a specific time more than 30 years ago, remains unchanged in its most important aspects, including the distribution of powers between the two heads of the executive branch, namely, the Prime Minister and the President of the Republic.

One of the consequences of the failure of the national project of the post-independence period, with its range of individual and collective disappointments, was the withdrawal of different social and ethnic groups. That has only reinforced the idea that it is everyone for themselves in the management of the State of Guinea-Bissau. As a result, crises arise one after another and resemble each other. That is why the State must be rebuilt through reform of the defence, security and justice sectors and the whole range of institutions allowing a return to regulation, which would facilitate competition and make it harder to wage war. It would also stimulate further growth through investment, creating more income to distribute and therefore fewer political parties trying to prey on public funds.

Once that vision shared by the Government and the international community has been consolidated, we could negotiate the restructuring of our cooperation and the coordination of aid. All cooperation agencies in the country would be reconfigured with a view to supporting the country in its reforms once they have been prescribed and perhaps even the subject of a round table.

Such an approach could be launched immediately after the legislative elections and allow us to respond appropriately to the current and legitimate questions that are being posed. For example, is the presence of UNIOGBIS still useful in Guinea-Bissau after more than 20 years? What about the presence of the ECOWAS mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB)? In our opinion, it is necessary to strengthen the international presence while reshaping it in response to the needs of the reform and rebuilding of the State. We believe that cooperation between the United Nations and the Government

following the legislative elections should be based on the principle of strengthening the Government's capacity to carry out reform. With regard to the presence of ECOMIB, it would be desirable for it to be able to carry out on the ground the additional mission of supporting us more closely in the reform process in general and in particular in the defence and security sectors.

If all the measures that I have just cited are to succeed, Guineans must come to an agreement among themselves before the elections. It is in that spirit that I proposed to the political parties represented in our Parliament the adoption of a stability pact, the draft of which is still the subject of discussions, which I personally led on 20 August. Those consultations will be broadened to take into account the point of view and contribution of civil society and all those who are willing to participate in improving its content and promoting its adoption. We are convinced that the stability pact, once adopted with the shared support and commitment of all, will contribute greatly to lifting spirits and to forging a feeling of national unity of action at all levels in the judicious, effective and responsible management of the destiny of our people.

The free, transparent and credible elections sought by all can happen in Guinea-Bissau only if we ensure in advance the involvement of all, without exception, in choosing the method and specific technical conditions that will allow them to take place. A reliable electoral census, undertaken in full transparency, under the conditions stipulated by the electoral law and without eliciting suspicions of manipulation or fraud, is a sine qua non condition for success. That is the bet that we have made, and it is certainly the path that the Government as a whole has chosen to follow. That is why I took the time to recall the negotiation among the political parties regarding a well-defined process that has proved to be the best suited to the electoral census.

The organization of elections at the national level is never an easy task, even for the richest countries, where the democratic system is firmly and sufficiently anchored in their values. In the case of our country, Guinea-Bissau, I must say that the difficulties that we face are still numerous, but they are not insurmountable. Certain aspects related to the agreed choice that we have made with regard to the electoral census and to the printing of voting cards are described in the report under consideration. In that regard, I would like to remove all ambiguity and to affirm that we are sparing no effort to ensure the holding of legislative elections in our country on the scheduled date of 18 November.

That said, I again call on the international community to keep its promises and, above all, to honour its pledges because at the moment the international community is not contributing a penny to preparing and, ultimately, to holding the census that is due to start. Currently, only the Government, with its meagre resources, is dealing with that very burdensome task for the State budget. That is the mandate that I have received, and it is a responsibility that I, as Prime Minister, intend to fully assume, with the support of all members of the Government.

Given the delivery schedules for the biometric registration kits that we ordered from abroad, and which we paid for through our own funds on deposit with the United Nations Development Programme, and in order to be able to meet, as far as possible, all the stages of the electoral process, we appealed to brotherly and friendly countries, such as Timor-Leste, Nigeria, Mali, Angola and Cabo Verde, to provide us on a temporary basis with some of the equipment for voter registration at their disposal, which will allow us, with the goodwill of all political actors of our country, to initiate operations in the coming days and to anticipate the identification and full registration of voters throughout the national territory. Allow me to express our deep gratitude to all those countries for their great support and solidarity. Ultimately, we will make use of the kits provided by Timor-Leste and Nigeria to address the electoral census arrangement, which we have negotiated with the political parties.

Our Government has made an exceptional effort to contribute to the financing of the legislative elections, the organization of which requires considerable funds that, unfortunately, we alone are not able to ensure. There is currently a significant financial gap that needs to be urgently filled. That is why we have sought the help of our development partners and the international community in general. In that regard, I take this opportunity to very warmly thank all countries and institutions, including the ECOWAS Commission and the West African Economic and Monetary Union in particular, which have been willing to help to ensure the availability of the necessary funds in the form of pledges that have yet to be disbursed to us. I would also like to express our gratitude to the Government of Portugal, which, as in previous elections, has provided us with a significant amount of materials.

Admittedly, the organization of the legislative elections in Guinea-Bissau on 18 November is not an end in itself. However, it is clearly a decisive step

towards restoring political stability in our country, consolidating the gains of democracy and strengthening the rule of law. Over the past two decades, we have faced difficulties of all kinds. However, we hope that a national surge will emerge. I am convinced that a better awareness of the real issues — in particular, the ongoing pursuit of the improved social well-being of our people — is possible in our country. We have every reason to assert that our people — the people of Guinea Bissau, who are a peaceful, hospitable and noble people — are ready to demonstrate once again their civic and political maturity and their commitment to further working, alongside other peoples of the world, to build a more just, peaceful, secure and prosperous world for all.

At the beginning of my remarks, I said that two decades ago — to be more precise, in June 1998, the date of the outbreak of an armed conflict that proved to be devastating and whose consequences we still suffer today — the situation in Guinea-Bissau has been on the agenda of the Security Council. Was it not the Secretary-General of that time — the sorely-missed Kofi Annan, an illustrious son of Ghana, his native country, and of Africa, where he was raised, a citizen emeritus committed to the world, and to whose memory and unforgettable work I respectfully pay tribute — who recommended to the Security Council the establishment of an effective political structure in Guinea-Bissau in 1999?

Twenty years later, where are we? The question indeed deserves to be asked and calls for reflection. In that regard, I am pleased that the Secretary-General has indicated in his report that he intends to make recommendations to the Security Council on a new configuration of UNIOGBIS, which no doubt will better meet our common desire to achieve greater efficiency and further results, including by rationalizing resources and focusing on targeted actions that can have an impact immediately, or at least in the short term. I am thinking in particular but not only about strengthening the rule of law, protecting fundamental freedoms, matters related to the existence and functioning of an accessible, effective and fair justice system, the overarching issue of gender, the increased participation of women in society in general, and in particular their rightful place in all political and economic areas, and the effective exercise of power, as noted by Ms. Tavares Pinto in her most edifying briefing. We are, in any case, ready to participate actively in such consideration.

The crisis situation in Guinea-Bissau is not inevitable. We have known periods of great stability, during which most of our efforts were focused on the problems of development and creating better living conditions for our people. Our country has many strengths for building a better future for its population and for providing genuine opportunities for the education and flourishing of its young people in particular.

The citizens of Guinea-Bissau, our countrymen, are not bellicose people. On the contrary, we are a united and peaceful people. In the recent past, our soldiers have participated, honourably in United Nations peacekeeping missions. Guinea-Bissau served on the Security Council in 1996 and 1997 and assumed the presidency 22 years ago this month. At that time — that is to say, at a time when our country recorded notable economic growth and showed promising development indices — no one would have imagined that, two decades later, we would be here to consider how to unite our energies and resources in order to rebuild a State that many years squandered in political conflict have weakened to the point of failure. As we have seen elsewhere, especially in Africa, that is no easy task, but for our part we are firmly resolved to succeed in turning the situation around so that our country can assume its rightful place among the community of nations. It is that rightful place — that of a dignified and respectable country conscious of its national and international obligations — that we wish to rediscover and restore within the international community.

I conclude by vigorously reaffirming that the situation prevailing in Guinea-Bissau is not irredeemable; it is within our power to change course. Not only do we have the ability, but we, the citizens of Guinea-Bissau, ultimately bear the responsibility to do so. Such is the new path we wish to blaze — a course that will allow us to renew the institutions of our Republic, crucially through the transparent holding of free and credible legislative elections on 18 November. This path towards a stable Guinea-Bissau will allow us to build peace, democracy, social justice and respect for human rights, and thereby a hopeful and prosperous future for our country and its population.

The President: I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.8338

Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8338th meeting
Thursday, 30 August 2018, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Ms. Pierce	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Inchauste Jordán
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Ipo
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Kuwait	Mr. Almunayekh
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sweden	Mr. Orrenius Skau
	United States of America	Mr. Hunter

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

Letter dated 30 July 2018 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2018/750)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

18-27247 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

Letter dated 30 July 2018 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2018/750)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Israel and Lebanon to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2018/796, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by France.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/750, which contains the text of a letter dated 30 July 2018 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, France, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Russian Federation, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President: The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2433 (2018).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mrs. Gueguen (France) (*spoke in French*): France welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2433 (2018), which is a strong signal of our collective support for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), whose role is crucial to safeguarding peace in an extremely troubled regional context. As penholder and as is the case every year, France worked to preserve this Security Council unity.

I wish to recall in the first place the significant efforts undertaken by UNIFIL and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to implement resolution 2373 (2017), adopted last year. We wanted to continue those efforts by improving and clarifying UNIFIL's tasks. This new resolution also recalls the measures to be taken by Member States to prevent the sale or supply of weapons or materials not authorized by the Government of Lebanon or UNIFIL. But the mandate of the Force, its tasks and capabilities are preserved, and the balance between all the concerns formulated is maintained.

As we often repeat, UNIFIL is a regional public good. It is an essential element of stability in an area marred by crises. It fulfils its tasks in a demanding environment, monitoring the cessation of hostilities around the Blue Line and preventing any risk of escalation, including through the Tripartite Mechanism. The mission's essential deterrent action is at the heart of its mandate. Moreover, the requirement to guarantee the freedom of movement of UNIFIL is strongly recalled in this new text. For us, that is an essential part of the Force's mandate to which we must remain vigilant, as we saw in the 4 August incident.

UNIFIL's work also supports the strengthening of the Lebanese Armed Forces and their deployment throughout the territory, in order to enable the Lebanese State to fully exercise its authority and sovereignty. Only the presence of the Lebanese State and its armed and security forces, in accordance with resolution 1701 (2006), will create the conditions for lasting stability in southern Lebanon and in Lebanese territorial waters. It is with that purpose in mind that we approached this renewal, in particular with regard to the maritime component of Force, whose missions are intended, when the time comes and gradually, to be provided by the Lebanese Navy. That is also the goal pursued with the standing up of the model regiment, which UNIFIL will continue to support.

In that context, and in order to face up to these serious challenges, it is obviously necessary that a Government be rapidly formed in Lebanon. That is also reflected in this resolution.

It was essential to reaffirm the unanimous support of the Council for UNIFIL, which we have done today. Protecting the UNIFIL mandate and its neutrality is to

contribute to the stability of Lebanon, at a time when its political balances are fragile, and to safeguard peace along the Blue Line.

Mr. Hunter (United States of America): The United States is pleased to join the consensus in support of the mandate renewal today. I also want to commend France for the cooperative spirit in which it led the process.

Maintaining peace and stability between Lebanon and Israel is of paramount importance. The mandate makes clear that the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) must have freedom of movement and access to the Blue Line. The mandate also underscores the importance of the arms embargo included in resolution 1701 (2006). With the support of Iran, Hizbullah has grown its arsenal in Lebanon in direct threat to peace along the Blue Line and the stability of all of Lebanon. In support of the Taif Accords, the Security Council decided that all States shall prevent the sale or supply of arms in Lebanon to any entity other than the Government of Lebanon or UNIFIL. Twelve years later, it is unacceptable that Hizbullah continues to flout this embargo, Lebanon's sovereignty and the will of the majority of the Lebanese people.

Another important component in this mandate is the language on the Maritime Task Force. At the inception of the Task Force, the Security Council failed to provide a clear transition strategy and goal for the Lebanese Navy to work towards eventually assuming responsibilities for the Task Force. We have taken steps to correct that oversight, and urge the international community to support the strengthening and expansion of Lebanese naval capabilities accordingly.

As we continue to review missions against our peacekeeping principles, the United States will continue to work to ensure that UNIFIL remains an effective mission. We reiterate our commitment to supporting the stability and peace that the people of Lebanon and Israel have long desired.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian delegation voted in favour of resolution 2433 (2018), regarding the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), taking into account, first and foremost, the endorsement of the Lebanese side of the new version of the text. That is a key principle of any peacekeeping operation.

The activities of UNIFIL peacekeepers are having a stabilizing effect not only along the Blue Line, which separates Lebanon and Israel, but within the Lebanese State itself and in the Middle East as a whole. We highly value the work of the Tripartite Mechanism in preventing and resolving incidents. That mission should be preserved, and we should avoid attempts to transform it into a politicized instrument. We must bear in mind that peacekeepers are there to help Lebanese State institutions, including security structures; they are not there to replace them. We are convinced that the further activities of this important peacekeeping operation will be conducted while respectfully bearing in mind the views of the Lebanese Government. Any other approach would be unacceptable.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2433 (2018), which demonstrates the Security Council's important support for the work of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

China acknowledges that UNIFIL continus to effectively fulfil its mandate and is making an important contribution to maintaining overall calm and stability in its area of operation. We commend the cooperation provided by the host country in the performance of UNIFIL's tasks, as well as the hard work by troop-contributing countries and all peacekeepers.

The Security Council's extension of UNIFIL's mandate for an additional year is conducive to maintaining stability in southern Lebanon and contributes to further implementing resolution 1701 (2006). The Council and the international community should continue to provide political support to UNIFIL, as well as the necessary resources, so as to ensure that it has the capacity to perform its duties.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my national capacity.

Like others, we were pleased to vote in favour of this text. We commend the work of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in helping to maintain calm and stability along the Blue Line. It is vital for the peace, stability and security of both Lebanon and Israel. We call on all parties to respect UNIFIL's mandate and the Blue Line.

The Security Council has today reaffirmed its commitment to Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity and stability, condemned all violations of

the Blue Line and re-stated that it is the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), along with Lebanon's other State security agencies, that are the only legitimate defenders of Lebanon.

We look forward to receiving the outcomes requested on decreasing the Maritime Task Force and transitioning responsibilities to the LAF. We look forward to seeing tangible outcomes.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

Before adjourning the meeting, as this is the last scheduled meeting of the Council for the month of August, I would like to express the sincere appreciation of the delegation of the United Kingdom to the members of the Council, in particular my Permanent Representative colleagues and the staff of their Missions, as well as to the Council's secretariat for all the support they have given us — and I include the Secretary-General, the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and others.

It has not been the busiest of months because it has been August. But I think we have been able to get consensus on several important issues that we deal with. Sadly, consensus on some of the most intractable foreign policy problems, notably Syria, continues to elude the Council. I am sure that is something we will want to return to.

What success there has been is ascribed to all of us. Without the hard work, support and positive contributions of every delegation and representatives of the Secretariat, things could not have been achieved. Of course, I include the conference servicing officers, our good friends the interpreters, the verbatim reporters and our good friends the security staff.

As we end the British presidency, I know I speak on behalf of the Security Council in wishing the delegation of the United States good luck for the month of September.

The meeting rose at 3.10 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.8339

Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8339th meeting
Tuesday, 4 September 2018, 11.45 a.m.
New York

President:	Mrs. Haley	(United States of America)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Yao Shaojun
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Ipo
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mr. Michon
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Temenov
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Ms. Samson
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
	Sweden	Mr. Orrenius Skau
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen

Agenda

Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2017/507)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

18-27503 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 11.55 a.m.

Expression of thanks to the outgoing President

The President: As this is the first public meeting of the Security Council for the month of September, I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to Her Excellency Ambassador Karen Pierce, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, for her service as President of the Council during the month of August. I speak for all members in thanking not only Karen but also Jonathan and the entire delegation on a job well done.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2017/507)

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United States.

All Security Council members should have the provisional programme of work, which was circulated. I have always believed in transparency and that everything we do should be in the open. I know from the breakfast meeting this morning that there were some concerns, or issues, with the provisional programme of work. I felt that, rather than explaining it to one another, members could each openly say, in their national capacity, whether there are any issues with the provisional programme of work, or whether we can continue by consensus. I wanted to at least allow each delegation to say it in its own voice instead of having it said on its behalf. I hope that this will be the start of continued transparency. I think we have come a long way in the past couple of years in terms of making sure all Council meetings are open meetings. During the United States presidency, every meeting will be an open meeting. We hope that all members will respect that and consider continuing that policy during their presidency as well.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to join you, Madam President, in congratulating and thanking the delegation of the United Kingdom for its work during its presidency of the Security Council last month. I wish you, Madam President, and your team every success in your work on behalf of the entire Council.

I thank you for your team's work for the drafting of the provisional programme of work. I see that we have a rather broad agenda covering many topics this month. Some of them are related to my region. Others include Haiti, the adoption of a draft resolution and the possibility of expanding the mandate of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, as well as the issue of South Sudan and the proposal of the presidency of convening a meeting during the high-level week to discuss the situation in Iran, among many others.

We agree with a majority of the chosen topics but, as we have expressed throughout the drafting of the provisional programme of work, we believe that the desired meeting under the item of cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in the maintenance of international peace and security with regard to the situation in Nicaragua should not be addressed within the Security Council primarily because, as we have expressed on other items, the situation in Nicaragua does not constitute a threat to international peace and security. We believe that it is important for the Security Council to clearly adhere to what is stated in the Charter of the United Nations, which is that its primary responsibility is to maintain international peace and security. We support the policy of the Secretary-General with regard to preventive diplomacy, but preventive diplomacy must be used within a framework of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all States Members of the United Nations and where all States are on an equal footing.

Furthermore, as we have said clearly in the past, the work being done by regional and subregional organizations is very important, but the Security Council should limit its efforts to addressing cases that represent a threat to international peace and security. The United Nations system is broad. It is not limited to the Security Council. If there is a situation related to human rights, we have the Human Rights Council, and the membership as a whole elects the members of the Human Rights Council. The same goes for other topics that are, of course, important.

I should also say that we will be leaving the Security Council in a few weeks, and we are concerned about the possibility that we are giving the Security Council more power than the Charter of the United Nations itself entrusts to it. That would weaken the multilateral system and empower an organ that, as we have said many times before, is not democratic or transparent and in many cases does not represent the interests of the entire membership.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I too would like to join in congratulating our British colleagues on their presidency in August. They had a difficult job and nonetheless handled it well. I also wish you and your team every success, Madam President. This too will be a complicated month. You effectively lose a week to the general debate, but I think with our collective efforts we can make headway and discuss genuinely important issues pertaining to international peace and security.

In that context, I wish to endorse my Bolivian colleague's statement, which I felt made a very compelling and persuasive argument. There is no question that the Security Council should focus on issues that pose a threat to international peace and security, and in that regard, we see no such threat from the situation in Nicaragua. Furthermore, we fear that putting this item on the agenda of the Security Council will only undermine the efforts being made in Nicaragua to resolve the situation, and which of course we fully support. Our hope is that you, Madam President, will heed our views and that we can continue to work together as a team and achieve success in areas where we can make genuine progress.

I also want to note that we understand and are familiar with the previously mentioned plans to hold a high-level meeting on 26 September. We assume that the discussion will take place in the context of the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015). In our view, the subject of Iran can be discussed only within that framework. In particular, we very much hope that the aspects linked to the withdrawal of the United States from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action will be discussed.

Mr. Yao Shaojun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would first like to congratulate you, Madam President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council in September. We know this is a difficult month and we wish you luck. We also thank the United Kingdom for presiding over the Council in August.

China is of the view that the situation in Nicaragua does not constitute a threat to international peace and security. We support the position of Bolivia and Russia and do not believe that it is necessary for the Security Council to get involved.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I too would like to begin by congratulating you, Madam President, and your delegation on your assumption of the presidency. Peru wishes you every success and extends the support of its delegation to you. We also congratulate the United Kingdom on its very successful presidency and the professional way in which it led our deliberations.

I would also like to say that we fully support you, Madam President, on the provisional programme of work you presented for this month. We agree with you about the importance of many of the meetings you have planned. With regard to the meeting on the maintenance of peace in particular, we want to emphasize that we also think that the issue of the link between corruption and peace and security is a new theme, but we would like to hear more details about how it is being planned.

With regard to the issue of Nicaragua, we would like to point out that if this issue is presented as it appears in the provisional programme of work, in the framework of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, that is, with regard to cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, there is a very specific article, Article 54, which says that the United Nations should be kept informed of everything being done in regional organizations with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security. We believe that in that sense the meeting would be pertinent and we would be ready to support it. We believe what has been said at various points with regard to the theme of preventive diplomacy is very important. That applies perfectly in this case, because there are Security Council resolutions that specifically and emphatically point out that serious abuses and violations of international law, human rights and international humanitarian rights can be an early indication of a simmering conflict. In that sense, based on the merits of preventive diplomacy, we would agree to holding such a meeting.

Mr. Allen (United Kingdom): Let me join others in congratulating you, Madam President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council. I would like to

say straight out that we support the ambition you have shown, Madam, in your provisional programme of work, and we are very happy with it. As all of us tend to do during our presidencies, I note that the United States has proposed a thematic debate, this one on corruption and conflict, which I think will be very interesting for us to consider. We support it completely on that.

The main focus of our conversation today has been on Nicaragua, where we have seen many lives lost and increased refugee claims in the region. The United Kingdom, as part of its presidency, hosted an open debate last week (see S/PV.8334) on mediation and the importance of that element of the agenda in our preventive toolbox. I therefore think it is right that as a Council we are considering those issues and thinking about how we can support countries in the region.

The representative of Peru mentioned the regional dimension. I would also like to point to Article 34 of the Charter of the United Nations, which states very clearly that the Security Council may investigate any dispute or situation that might lead to international friction or give rise to a dispute, in order to determine whether the continuation of the dispute or situation is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security. It is therefore clear to me that this is a proper subject for debate. The United Kingdom supports the United States fully, and I would encourage our colleagues in the Council to agree to having those discussions and a debate. That is what we are here for. I would also encourage the Government of Nicaragua to come to that meeting in a constructive spirit and focus on its vision for an inclusive and mediated solution.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): I should like to begin by congratulating you, Madam, on your country's assumption of the presidency for the month of September. I wish you good luck and full success in your endeavours. Allow me also to mention how much we appreciated the efforts and professionalism of the British presidency.

With regard to the work of the Council for this month, we support your proposal this morning. We welcome it and appreciate the fact that you are will organize two main events, on corruption and security, as well as others on peacekeeping.

Turning to the question of Nicaragua, Poland appreciates the fact that the meeting will take place under the agenda item "Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations". I concur with the remarks of my Peruvian colleague. It is important that this discussion have added value.

Mr. Michon (France) (*spoke in French*): We wish you every success, Madam President, in your country's presidency in September, which is never an easy month as it coincides with the plenary session of the General Assembly.

With regard to the provisional programme of work that you presented to us this morning, we wish to note our full support for the programme, including the consideration of the situation in Nicaragua under the agenda item "Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations", which will allow the Council to engage in an exercise of preventive diplomacy, as provided for by its mandate.

Mr. Temenov (Kazakhstan): First of all, we would like to join you, Madam President, in commending the British presidency for its exemplary stewardship of the Council's work in August. The delegation of Kazakhstan would like to congratulate the United States on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of September, which will be busy indeed, coinciding as it does with the opening of start of the new session of the General Assembly and the general debate.

We commend the United States for its well-structured provisional programme of work for September, with which we agree in general. However, we would like to note our reservations regarding the inclusion of the Nicaraguan issue in the provisional programme of work.

Finally, Madam President, would like to wish you and your able team every success during the month of September.

Ms. Samson (Netherlands): Allow me to wish you and your team, Madam President, the best of luck for your presidency this month, which starts off in a very interesting and transparent way. Allow me also to thank the United Kingdom and its delegation for an exemplary presidency during the month of August.

We thank the United States presidency for proposing its provisional programme of work, which we support. It includes some very important discussions, including on corruption and peacekeeping operations, and we look forward to discussing under your guidance a number of pertinent issues, including from a preventive perspective, such as the situation in

Nicaragua. We therefore reiterate our support for the provisional programme of work and look forward to the month of September.

Mr. Ipo (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, we would like to wish you, Madam President, and your team every success during your presidency of the Security Council. We also commend the United Kingdom for its exemplary presidency and its constructive approach in guiding the work of the Council during the month of August.

My delegation expresses its full support for the provisional programme of work proposed by the United States, including the briefing on Nicaragua in the light of the developing crisis in that country and its impact in the region in the context of preventive diplomacy.

In conclusion, we look forward to a rich and constructive month of September under the presidency of your country, Madam President.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I should like to offer my sincere congratulations to the United Kingdom for its exemplary presidency during what was for many a month of vacation. Despite that fact, it managed to attain very positive outcomes through rich debates guided by its programme of work.

We also congratulate the United States on assuming the presidency for the month of September, which is no easy task. We express out satisfaction with the approach it has adopted, whereby almost all meetings will be held in an open modality, allowing the broader members to be informed as to the content of our discussions. Despite this being a very busy month due to the preparations for the holding of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly, I am convinced that this provisional programme of work will provide for a month of very positive outcomes in the Security Council.

With respect to Nicaragua, as we said this morning, while we regret the prevailing domestic situation in that Latin American country and call on the Government of Nicaragua to spare no effort in seeking a solution to this domestic problem, our Government is of the view that the situation does not as yet merit discussion in the Security Council. At present, the Organization of American States and the United Nations Secretariat could dedicate efforts, together with the Government of Nicaragua, to find a solution to the situation. As things stand, it does not constitute a threat to international peace and security, and we are therefore of the view that this matter remains the purview of the joint preventive diplomacy of the Secretary-General and the Organization of American States. We will continue to monitor the situation closely.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate your country, Madam President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month, and wish you success. As we mentioned during the breakfast meeting, your tasks will not be easy, but we have full trust that you and your team will be able to accomplish them.

I would also like to thank the delegation of the United Kingdom for its outstanding presidency of the Council during the month of August.

As Chair of the Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, I am very pleased that you have decided that the meetings will be open. This is unusual from a permanent Member State. Member States usually permanent prefer closed meetings, so your move is truly unprecedented on the part of a permanent member State. I assure you that we support transparency and will continue to support you throughout your presidency of the Council.

Of course, it is always better to adopt the programme of work by consensus, in conformity with established practice It is also unusual to discuss the provisional programme of work in an open meeting. Differences do exit and what matters is that we must spare no effort to reach consensus on the provisional programme of work.

Regarding the situation in Nicaragua, and even the situation in Iran at the end of the month, these are contentious issues, as we have heard from other representatives. As a Member State, we consider the Articles of the United Nations Charter to be sacred, in particular those related to the non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries and respect for their sovereignty, while we must discuss only those matters pertaining to international peace and security.

However, there are other Articles of the Charter that should also be taken into consideration, such as Article 34, as mentioned by Mr. Allen, which is quite clear. The Secretary-General may also, if he wishes, bring any matter to the attention of the Security Council, pursuant to Article 99.

One of our priorities, as States members of the Council, is the issue of preventive diplomacy and the

prevention of conflict. There can be no doubt that the regional dimension, especially the role played by regional organizations, is very important. We appreciate the role played by Peru and its proposal to discuss this matter in the context of regional peace. What I would like to underscore is that the unity of the Security Council is very important. If we are to contribute to addressing the situation, I believe that we must be united. Sometimes, differences and the discussion of a contentious issue do not positively contribute to improving the situation. That is a very important matter.

Ms. Guadey (Ethiopia): We would also like to congratulate our colleagues from the United Kingdom for their professionalism and efficient manner in presiding over the Security Council. Allow me to congratulate you as well, Madam President, for assuming the presidency of the Council for the month of September, a difficult month but we are sure that you will fly through. We look forward to engaging constructively in the meetings and would like to assure you of our full support.

However, we would like to echo some concerns raised by some members of the Security Council on the agenda item scheduled for 5 September, as we think that the situation in Nicaragua does not constitute a threat to international peace and security. It would therefore be very difficult for us to support the inclusion of the agenda item in the provisional programme of work.

Mr. Orrenius Skau (Sweden): Let me begin by joining others in congratulating you, Madam President, in assuming your role for this month. Let me also echo others in praising the United Kingdom presidency for the manner they led the Security Council during the month of August.

We have no objections to the provisional programme of work. We look forward to this month. It is important for the Council to assume its responsibility and come together on the wide range of issues on its agenda. We wish the presidency the best of luck. You, Madam President, and your team have our full support.

The President: I will now make a further statement in my national capacity.

The contention seems to about the meeting on Nicaragua. I said to some of the members this morning that all the explanations and reasons that have been raised for not having a meeting on Nicaragua are the exact same responses that were given to us on Venezuela. We were told that it was not a matter of peace and security, that it was a regional issue and that it was best dealt with at the Human Rights Council.

We went to the Human Rights Council. They would not hear it because Venezuela was on the Council. We had a meeting outside of the Human Rights Council, in Geneva, to try to bring attention to the issue. Now, as we look back to see where we are with Venezuela, we see that the average adult in Venezuela has lost 24 pounds. Ninety per cent do not know where their next meal is coming from. Thousands are crossing the border every day trying to get medical help and supplies. We have dealt many times with the African Union on regional issues; I do not know why we cannot deal with the Organization of American States (OAS) on regional issues. We have spoken with the OAS and give it full support and respect. That is why the Secretary General of the OAS is coming to brief us tomorrow.

I would ask any member who does not think that Nicaragua is an issue of peace and security to talk to the people of Nicaragua, the people of the region and the countries that have to accept the people of Nicaragua, to the Catholic Church, to which Ortega has turned because of Nicaragua.

My final question is, how many people have to die before it becomes a matter of peace and security? I think we have already reached that point. That is why the United States thought it was very important to have a meeting on Nicaragua — because we do not want another Syria or another Venezuela, and we think it is the responsibility of the Security Council to ensure that.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

There is no consensus on the adoption of the provisional programme of work, and there is no requirement in the Council's provisional rules of procedure that a programme of work be adopted. Rather, the adoption of a programme of work is Council practice and not required. Accordingly, the Security Council will proceed in its work without the adoption of a programme of work. The President of the Council, pursuant to rule 1 of the provisional rules of procedure, will convene a meeting on the situation in Nicaragua tomorrow at 10 a.m. in the Chamber.

Finally, I want to thank Ms. Egian and her team for pulling together this open meeting on the provisional programme of work. I also want to thank each and every one of the members for supporting the transparency

effort of this meeting. Any one of them could have stopped it, and I thank them for not doing so. I also want to thank the interpreters, who probably had to rush to get to us very quickly, for being flexible and realizing how important transparency is to the United States.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.8340

Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8340th meeting

Wednesday, 5 September 2018, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mrs. Haley	(United States of America)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Llorentty Soliz
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Adom
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce

Agenda

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security

The situation in Nicaragua

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

18-27658 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security

The situation in Nicaragua

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Costa Rica, Nicaragua and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Denis Ronaldo Moncada Colindres, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Gonzalo Koncke, Chief of Staff to the Secretary General of the Organization of American States, and Mr. Felix Maradiaga, civil society leader and former Secretary-General of the Ministry of Defence of Nicaragua.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now give the floor to Mr. Koncke.

Mr. Koncke (*spoke in Spanish*): I am grateful for the invitation extended to the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (OAS) to participate in this Security Council meeting and to brief it on the efforts that the General Secretariat has been undertaking in Nicaragua, as well as to provide an overview of the situation from the perspective of a regional organization. I wish to convey the greetings of OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro.

The situation involving death, violence, repression and political and social crisis in Nicaragua is the subject of extreme concern in the western hemisphere. The OAS General Secretariat is closely following the situation in the country, which, according to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), has resulted in 322 deaths since 18 April. Among the dead are 23 children and adolescents, as well as a number of detained persons. We also lament the deaths of 21 police officers between 18 April and 24 August. Tragically, the number of deaths in the country has been increasing. Again according to the IACHR, 76 people had died by the end of May, 212 by the end of June, 264 by the end of July and, as I said earlier, 322 by the end of August. As has unfortunately become routine, the OAS General Secretariat extends its condolences to the families and friends of the victims.

As is well known, the OAS Secretariat is continuously following the situation with a growing sense of concern at the loss of life and the deterioration of democracy and political and social coexistence in the country, as well as the corresponding effect on the economic situation, which disproportionately impacts the most vulnerable. Since 18 April, in line with the Inter-American Democratic Charter and its own Charter, the OAS has employed the tools at its disposal in the quest for peace, democracy, the rule of law, justice, truth and the re-establishment of the institutional order in the country. In that context, Secretary General Almagro secured authorization from the Government of Nicaragua for an IACHR mission to the country, which took place from 17 to 21 May and produced 15 recommendations that form the basis for the restoration of respect for, and the promotion of, human rights. Likewise, on 30 May, the Secretary General, the Government of Nicaragua and the IACHR Executive Secretary signed a document on the establishment of the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (GIEI), in line with recommendation 3 of the IACHR preliminary report.

Moreover, the Special Monitoring Mechanism for Nicaragua (MESENI) was established in the country pursuant to recommendation 15 of the preliminary report, mandated, as its name indicates, with monitoring the human rights situation on an ongoing basis. Similarly, the General Secretariat of the OAS has been working with the Government of Nicaragua for the necessary electoral reforms that will identify democratic solutions through popular expression in the country.

The Permanent Council of the OAU set out its position on the situation in Nicaragua in resolution 1108/18 of 18 July, by which, among other things, it reiterated

> "its vigorous condemnation of and grave concern over all acts of violence, repression, and human rights violations and abuses committed by police, parapolice groups, and others against the people

> of Nicaragua, as documented by the IACHR; to encourage that steps be taken to identify the individuals responsible, through the corresponding legal procedures; and to demand that parapolice groups be disbanded".

Similarly, the Permanent Council has created a working group composed of 12 countries in order to provide solutions to a problem of concern to the entire region.

It is regrettable that the situation in the country has not improved in terms of democracy, respect for human rights and social and political coexistence. The 322 deaths that I mentioned earlier were the result of repression, violence, the actions of irregular armed pro-Government groups, and violations of human rights. In its report of 22 June, the IACHR concluded that the State of Nicaragua had infringed on the rights to life, personal integrity, health, personal freedom, assembly, freedom of expression and access to justice. The Commission found especially worrisome

> "the assassinations, extrajudicial executions, abusive treatment, possible acts of torture and arbitrary detentions committed against the country's majority young population".

The IACHR conclusions concerning repeated violations delegitimize the Nicaraguan Government. The OAS General Secretariat believes that this process of delegitimation must end as soon as possible.

As pointed out by Secretary General Almagro, the solution for Nicaragua incontestably requires peace, truth, justice and democracy. To ensure truth and justice, it will be necessary for the Government of Nicaragua to facilitate and cooperate with the work of GIEI and MESENI, provide free access to places of interest, documents and necessary files, grant guarantees and facilities, offer the prescriptive answers of the State and not to hinder the work of those bodies. These are the fundamental demands that the General Secretariat of the OAS has made of the Nicaraguan Government.

In the same way, the General Secretariat of the OAS asserts that there can be no genuine solution for Nicaragua without heeding the voice of its people through the holding of free, fair, democratic and transparent elections, in accordance with inter-American standards. In that regard, the General Secretariat reiterates its invitation to the Government of Nicaragua to resume and accelerate the work that is being done with the Nicaraguan State to ensure that the pertinent electoral reforms are completed by January 2019, as agreed by both parties.

Secretary General Almagro has openly stated his opinion that the more timely holding of elections will be critical and represents a genuine solution to the crisis of democracy in the country. In situations of maximum polarization and tension, the validation of the voice of the people in the polls is the necessary path. The date for the holding of elections should be agreed among Nicaraguans — there is no other way — but we believe it essential to consult with the sources of political power. It is also important that the Government and the opposition, represented by the Civic Alliance for Justice and Democracy, revisit the possibility of holding talks that could lead to good-faith agreements between the parties, in which the participation of the Nicaraguan Episcopal Conference would be critical.

In conclusion, Nicaragua is at a crossroads on which its peace, democracy and future depend. We believe that this crossroads could have been avoided because the inter-American system has tools that it has made available to the Nicaraguans to find solutions, including electoral reforms and electoral monitoring to identify the will of the Nicaraguan people, and GIEI and MESENI to promote truth justice. At the centre of this crossroads is the Nicaraguan Government, on which depend the decision-making and the democratic gestures that will restore the country's institutions and find the path to the rule of law. After 18 April, we cannot apply to Nicaragua the same tools that led to the tragedy, because that would lead to more confrontation and more suffering for the people.

It is necessary to apply irreversibly democratic mechanisms that will restore to the Nicaraguan people the possibility of choosing and reviving political coexistence. At this crossroads, the Nicaraguan Government can opt for the revival of democratic institutions. There is still time to do so. Failure to do so would be to choose the erroneous path taken by other countries of the region that have fallen into dictatorial Governments in which the rule of law and democracy do not exist and that have led their people into misery, social and family disintegration, and emigration.

In the Americas in particular, crises of democracy and human rights affect more than just the country they afflict. The example of the migration crisis originated by the Venezuelan regime must serve as a warning. Nicaragua is not in a position to endure the exacerbation

of a social, economic and political crisis. At the same time, we in the General Secretariat of the OAS believe that Central America is not in a position to endure the exacerbation of a crisis of democracy and human rights in Nicaragua that amplifies migratory variables, encourages the actions of criminal gangs, and ends up generating elements harmful to regional stability and security.

That is why the General Secretariat of the OAS will continue advocating to find solutions for the country. We reiterate to the Nicaraguan Government the need to advance jointly in the work of electoral reform, agree on an electoral calendar for Nicaragua, facilitate the tasks of the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts and the Special Monitoring Mechanism for Nicaragua, and resume dialogue, with guarantees of non-repetition, in order to achieve peace, justice and human rights in the country.

The President: I thank Mr. Koncke for his briefing. We certainly appreciate the time he has taken to come to brief the Council on the situation in Nicaragua. We also appreciate the Organization of American States getting involved and taking charge of something that is happening in the region that we view with concern.

I now give the floor to Mr. Maradiaga.

Mr. Maradiaga (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank you, Madam President, for your leadership in placing the situation in Nicaragua on the agenda.

Few nations of the world have had such a difficult history of seeking peace as Nicaragua. The armed conflict that we suffered in the 1980s, which caused thousands of deaths and destabilized all of Central America, is still fresh in our memory. In that cyclical history of conflicts, Nicaragua has enjoyed the help of the international community when too much blood has already been spilled. I come before the Council to convey the urgency of a situation that threatens the peace and security of an entire region, as can be clearly deduced from the more than 23,000 Nicaraguan refugees who, in less than four months, have had to leave for neighbouring Costa Rica .

I know from my own experience the consequences of a conflict that spins out of control and expands throughout a region when it could have been prevented using the instruments allowed by the Charter of the United Nations and the inter-American system. When I was 12 years old, I lived in a refugee camp in the state of Texas, after having crossed alone, as an undocumented person, the border between Mexico and the United States of America, trying to escape the armed conflict in Nicaragua. I returned to Nicaragua in 1990, full of enthusiasm for the reconstruction of my country.

The experiences of my childhood defined my commitment to human rights, disarmament and non-violence. It was thus that, in 2003, I became a Disarmament Fellow thanks to a United Nations programme here at Headquarters. A short time later, I returned to Nicaragua and started an academic programme to train emerging youth leaders in the principles of the culture of peace in my country.

It was through my contacts as a university professor that, on the night of 20 April, I received desperate calls from several of my students. One of those calls, with the noise of firearms in the background, still tears at my heart. They said to me: "Professor, they are killing us — help us". That day, hundreds of young university students sought refuge in Managua Cathedral after Nicaraguan police shot at protesters indiscriminately. That afternoon, Álvaro Conrado, a 15-year-old boy, who went out to give the students water, died from a gunshot wound to the neck.

Over the next few weeks, I watched in awe as tens of thousands of people peacefully took to the streets to protest for their civil rights. In April, like thousands of Nicaraguans, I joined several ad hoc groups to help the wounded who had not been admitted to public hospitals. I do not have time today to talk about the pain of seeing the bodies of so many young people shot by snipers. On 30 May, at the Mother's Day march, I saw a teenager's brains blown out by a bullet before my very eyes. I personally managed to survive an attack on 28 May, when paramilitaries tried to shoot me a few yards from my office.

One of the most worrying aspects of this crisis is the criminalization of civil protest through the enactment of an anti-terrorism law that classifies any civic act of protest as terrorism. I was one of the first to be officially denounced, on 3 June, when the police apparatus that serves the Government accused me of terrorism and organized crime while I was in Washington, D.C., meeting with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. That accusation has been a kind of death sentence for me, because since then I have received hundreds of death threats, police

and paramilitaries have surrounded my home and office, and my family members have been intimidated.

On 11 July, a group of at least 20 paramilitaries stopped my car. When they recognized me, they made me get out and detained me and my companions, keeping AK-47 rifles and other high-calibre weapons trained on me the whole time. They asked me if I was ready to die. In a video that they recorded themselves, which went viral, they released me unharmed, saying, "Thank Commander Ortega that you are still alive." They said they had not yet been given permission to kill me. However, on 13 July, while I was meeting privately with students in the city of León, more than 30 people broke into the meeting room and beat me up, leaving me with several fractures. As I was being attacked by these Government-associated groups, I felt the same agony that I had experienced at 12 years old when I swam a freezing river to cross the border, with the feeling that I had lost the right to live peacefully in the country of my birth.

Despite the pain, I now have the opportunity to tell the Council my story, while the voices of hundreds of other Nicaraguans have been silenced forever. More than 300 people, which is a highly conservative estimate, have been murdered, including a friend of mine, the journalist Ángel Gahona, who was shot in the head at the beginning of the crisis. My colleagues Cristhian Fajardo and his wife Maria Adilia are in jail, as are the leaders of the Movimiento Campesino, Medardo Mairena and Pedro Mena, as well as Irlanda Jerez and the university leaders Levis Rugama, Yaritza Mairena, Victoria Obando, Edwin Carcache and Alejandro Centeno. Another 240 other activists have been imprisoned for participating in the protests, and the number of political prisoners continues to rise.

Today Nicaragua has become a huge prison that pretends to be under control. However, an atmosphere of terror and indiscriminate persecution reigns every day. Masked gunmen, accompanied by police, burst into private Nicaraguan homes without a warrant. They consider possessing a blue-and-white national flag to be a crime. Human rights defenders and religious leaders of all denominations are being persecuted and threatened with death. Paramilitary groups have been invading private homes, arresting citizens at random and taking away their mobile phones. The slightest trace on a phone of an anti-Government tweet or message means imprisonment and serious forms of torture, such as genital amputation or the forced anal penetration of men and women using objects such as guns and rifles. There are doctors in Washington, D.C., today who are testifying under oath about the diagnoses that they have made of that type of violation. Nicaragua is becoming a country without hope.

I realize that there are many crises in the world and that the international community must prioritize its efforts, and I sympathize with that. However, for more than a decade, Daniel Ortega's regime has benefited from being under the international radar. We are currently facing a situation that, in addition to causing unprecedented widespread atrocities within Nicaragua, is creating dangerous instability in a volatile region of the world. This is not just another human rights crisis that can be resolved internationally. This is a State policy of mass and systematic violence against unarmed civilians. A time bomb is ticking in Nicaragua. Crimes against humanity are taking place every day, creating an environment conducive to an internal conflict of major proportions that we still have time to prevent. That will require the engaged attention of the United Nations if we are to ensure peace and security before it is too late.

With regard to the Security Council's mandate, I call on it to consider adopting a specific resolution on the critical situation in Nicaragua. I ask the members to allocate resources and create monitoring mechanisms for Nicaragua and for disarming the paramilitary groups. I recommend that the United Nations support the process of restoring the rule of law in Nicaragua. I leave the Council with the cry of a country that while small in size is huge in its desire to have a new opportunity for peace and justice.

The President: I want to say that this is the reason we are having this Security Council meeting, because the international community needs to pay attention to the situation in Nicaragua. I thank Mr. Maradiaga for giving the Nicaraguan people a voice and for taking the time to be at this meeting. It is important for us to hear his statement.

I now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Madam President, on the United States delegation's assumption of the presidency of the Council, and to wish you every success.

However, I will begin my statement not with words of gratitude for organizing today's meeting but rather by affirming our firm position. The Russian Federation is categorically opposed to a discussion of the situation in Nicaragua in the Security Council. We have major concerns about the invited briefers. I am not sure that the members of the Council who supported the format of today's meeting grasp the potential consequences if this type of practice should continue. What message can the Security Council send if it is clearly split on a particular issue? What value does it add to our discussion overall? Does the Council's mandate really include putting pressure on the authorities of a sovereign State to force it to make changes, whatever they may be, and thereby conniving with anti-Government forces? After today's discussion, the polarization in Nicaragua can only worsen. It is difficult not to believe that that is what the ringleaders of today's meeting had in mind.

We see support for this notion in that some people cannot deal with the fact that there are States in the world capable of carrying out self-sufficient, independent policies in the interests of their citizens while not playing up to the regional ambitions of major Powers. Instead of building relations with such States on a basis of mutual respect, they all rush to inflict maximum damage on their economies in order to provoke social unrest and foment intolerance with the sole purpose of achieving regime change. It is extremely regrettable that international and regional organizations are getting involved in these processes.

The initiators of today's discussion are trying to ignore the fact that thanks to the Government's efforts, the situation in the country has recently stabilized. The outstanding disagreements should be resolved through a direct, peaceful dialogue, without destructive outside pressure.

I want to say it once again. It is obvious to us that the issue of Nicaragua has no place on the Security Council's agenda. The Council is responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, and the domestic political situation in Nicaragua does not pose those kinds of threats. Rather, it is a vivid, sad example of destructive outside interference. And what we heard at the beginning of this morning's meeting compels us to conclude that the Security Council appears to be becoming something like a court of trial for Nicaragua.

Taking the words of its initiators on faith, an unsophisticated listener could get the impression that the United States really cares about Nicaraguans. It is no secret to anyone, however, that Washington's subversive relationship to Managua has a long history. The fact of the open interference of the United States in Nicaragua's internal affairs was confirmed by the 27 July 1986 decision of the International Court of Justice in The Hague with regard to the so-called Iran-Contra affair, when the United States tried to circumvent its own laws in order to finance Nicaraguan insurgents.

And since the American presidency of the Council has used a regional rationale in order to shovel the Nicaraguan issue onto the Security Council's agenda, we should not fail to mention some examples of Washington's interference in the internal affairs of other Latin American States as well. Cubans have never forgotten the Bay of Pigs invasion; Chileans are unlikely to forget the role that the United States played in overthrowing the Government of Salvador Allende; and to this very day Venezuelans are still receiving direct threats of the use of military force, which is a gross violation of the Charter of the United Nations. And all of that is far from being Washington's complete record of service in one region alone. I have not even touched on earlier episodes, or the Monroe Doctrine, which, it is true, has not been in operation with regard to Europe for a long time. The peoples of Africa, Asia, the Middle East and the Pacific also have some things to say about this issue. Against the backdrop of this dictatorial policy, which you do not even bother to disguise, Madam President, your accusations about third countries' mythical interference in American domestic political life with the supposed goal of undermining America's great democracy look particularly clumsy.

We in the United Nations talk a lot about the importance of conflict prevention. And we often hear claims that human rights situations are indicators of looming crises. In fact, as we have once again been convinced today, blatant interference in the affairs of a sovereign State has replaced so-called preventive diplomacy and is discrediting the very notion of preventive diplomacy itself. Reality is presenting us with more and more examples of the fact that the concept of human rights violations as indicators of conflict is one of trickery and hypocrisy. More often than not the reality is just the opposite — it is conflicts, including those stirred up from outside, that result in major violations of human rights. So let us not interfere

in the internal processes of sovereign States. After all, you yourself are always exhorting everyone about that, Madam President. Or is it only others who are not allowed to do it?

We call on Washington to refrain from its efforts in the colonial tradition to influence the situation in Nicaragua, and in particular those specifically aimed at it, such as its Nicaraguan Investment Conditionality Act initiative, its visa and other restrictions on Nicaraguan officials and the abolition of temporary protected status for migrants from Nicaragua. And if the United States is really concerned about the situation of Nicaraguan citizens, it would be logical to lift the economic restrictions that have been imposed on them for political reasons. We genuinely hope that all of Nicaragua's political forces will demonstrate common sense and will work consistently to establish constructive and respecful cooperation within the framework of its existing laws and Constitution.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. Gonzalo Koncke, Chief of Staff to the Secretary-General of the Organization of American States, and Mr. Felix Maradiaga for their valuable briefings. I would also like to welcome Mr. Denis Moncada Colindres, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua, to our meeting.

We are here today in the absence of a consensus among the members of the Security Council on holding this meeting. In that regard, we note Article 34 of Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations, which states that

> "The Security Council may investigate any dispute or any situation which might lead to international friction or give rise to a dispute, in order to determine whether the continuance of the dispute or situation is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security."

That underscores the role of the Security Council to apply preventive diplomacy in order to prevent conflicts and address situations and crises as early as possible if there are any early-warning signs of such conflicts that could endanger international peace and security, in accordance with the Council's mandate as outlined in Article 24 of the Charter.

Regional and subregional organizations also play an essential role in dealing with regional issues before they escalate, as expressed in Article 52 of the Charter, which calls for enabling them to deal with matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security provided that such activities are consistent with the purposes and principles of the United Nations. All such preventive measures in the Charter are available to the Security Council so that it can address crises at an early stage and often prevent conflicts and destabilization. Preventive diplomacy has been one of the priorities of the State of Kuwait during its membership of the Council, as we believe that addressing unrest and crises at an early stage can spare enormous losses on the financial, economic, and political fronts, and especially losses of human life.

We are concerned about the recent events in Nicaragua and regret the violence and the many dead and wounded. We underscore the importance of holding the perpetrators accountable and averting similar incidents in the future. We call on the parties concerned to abide by international humanitarian law and international human rights law. We also urge that a national dialogue be launched in good faith, aimed at reaching a peaceful solution to the crisis and avoiding repercussions that could affect security and destabilize Nicaragua and the region. This should be done while taking into consideration the interest of the country and the the people's right to a free and dignified life. We therefore urge the Government of Nicaragua to continue taking the steps necessary to de-escalate tensions and cooperating with all the relevant parties, including the Organization of American States, in order to get through this difficult period.

The State of Kuwait emphasizes the importance of acting based on the principles established in international law for addressing such situations. We also emphasize our full commitment to the principles stipulated in Article 2 of the Charter, which call for respecting States' sovereignty and refraining from interfering in their internal affairs.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): This is the first time I am taking the floor under your presidency, Madam President, so I would like to congratulate you and your team on your assumption of the stewardship of the Council for September. I would also like to thank Mr. Koncke of the Organization of American States (OAS) for his informative briefing and Mr. Maradiaga for his harrowing testimony.

I think the Ambassador of Kuwait very clearly set out the legal framework under the Charter of the United

Nations for why we are having this debate today, and we are grateful to the United States delegation for putting it on the Council's agenda. I will not rehearse that legal framework, since in my view Ambassador Alotaibi gave a very good account of it, but what I do want to say is that it is right that the Council is made aware by the regional organization concerned of that organization's concerns and of the worry that this could begin to have effects throughout the region. I do not think we should ever reach a stage where the Council cannot hear from a regional organization about its concerns about what is happening in territory for which it is responsible.

But more than that, I think we also need to remember that the Nicaraguan Government has expelled a United Nations agency — the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). I think that is a very important fact, independent of the points regarding regional organizations and Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations. The Council needs to defend the United Nations entities. Therefore, even if there were no other reason, we would support discussing this issue today.

Lastly, I note that there has been a situation of refugees created. By definition, refugees cross international borders. It is therefore right that the Council should be able to debate the implications of that act, which may or may not constitute an unfriendly act, but also risks being destabilizing to international peace and security. I am not making a judgement that it is destabilizing but, as we heard from the Kuwaiti representative, the Council has the responsibility to investigate situations that may give rise to those implications — and I stress the word "may". I think that is exactly what we are doing today.

My Government has been watching the events in Nicaragua very closely. We regret the loss of life that has occurred since the protests began in April, and we call for an end to the violence and for the Government of Nicaragua to comply with its international human rights obligations. Those obligations include the people's right to freedom of expression and to demonstrate peacefully and lawfully. We have been deeply concerned by the excessive use of force by the authorities and pro-Government paramilitaries against the people of Nicaragua.

We call on the Nicaraguan Government to demobilize paramilitary groups and to end the repression against its citizens. We have been alarmed by the many reports we have seen that give rise to human rights concern. Those include the use of live ammunition against protesters. We call for those reports to be thoroughly investigated.

Maintaining press freedoms is always important. It is particularly so during times of unrest. We urge the Nicaraguan Government to respect those freedoms and to allow the independent press to report freely, without suffering persecution and harassment. And we are very concerned at reports of violence against independent media outlets, journalists and their families.

I would also like to register our deep concern about reports of arbitrary detentions of dissenters. Again, we urge the Nicaraguan Government to respect the right to a fair trial and prisoners' right to due process, a proper defence and to respect the rights of their families.

Looking ahead, I think we are all aware that the challenges in Nicaragua can be overcome only through a meaningful and inclusive dialogue that addresses the legitimate concerns of the protesters. The United Kingdom was encouraged by the establishment of a national dialogue in May. We welcome the role that the Episcopal Conference of Nicaragua was able to play in convening that dialogue and mediating, but we regret that the dialogue has had many breaks because of the violence, and the recent decision by the Government to abandon the process is very regrettable. I once again urge the Nicaragua Government to fulfil its commitment to engaging sincerely in a dialogue, including by ensuring peaceful conditions for the dialogue to resume.

Turning to the OAS, the United Kingdom supports its work. We also support the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and of course the United Nations, in attempting to resolve the current crisis. Those organizations have important roles to play in supporting dialogue and ensuring that human rights transgressions are fully investigated. I referred earlier to the expulsion of OHCHR. That followed the publication of its report on human rights violations and abuses in the context of protests in Nicaragua. I would like to urge the Nicaraguan Government to reconsider that decision, to permit the OAS working group to enter the Nicaragua to carry out its important work and not to impede the work of the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts established by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

In conclusion, a return to peace and security in Nicaragua benefits not only the people of Nicaragu

but also the whole region. We heard from the Russian representative a long catalogue of history. History is important. It provides context, but it is not the reason we are here today. We are here today for all the arguments Ambassador Alotaibi and I set out at the beginning — we want to see stability, we want the violence to end and we hope and urge the Nicaraguan Government to engage meaningfully in an inclusive and constructive dialogue and to ensure that all human rights transgressions are fully investigated.

The President: I personally thank the United Kingdom for its presidency last month and for its delegation's work.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, we congratulate you, Madam President, for having assumed the presidency of the Security Council for the month of September. You can count on our delegation's support for a successful mandate. We also wish to congratulate Ambassador Karen Pierce and the delegation of the United Kingdom on their successful presidency during the month of August. And we welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua.

We also welcome the holding of this meeting and the briefing on the situation in Nicaragua, as presented by Mr. Gonzalo Koncke, from the Organization of American States (OAS), and Mr. Felix Maradiaga, civil society leader in Nicaragua.

My delegation finds the holding of this meeting relevant under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, which, among other things, provides that the Council must be kept fully informed of the activities undertaken by regional organizations for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Peru looks on with great concern at the situation in Nicaragua, which is being monitored by the OAS. We reiterate our emphatic condemnation of the grave violence that has led to the regrettable loss of hundreds of human lives, thousands injured and an indeterminate number of missing persons. Our concern and condemnation applies to all repressive acts and violations of human rights committed by police and paramilitary groups, which, as has been noted, include extrajudicial executions, forced disappearances, cases of torture and sexual violence in detention centres, as well as attacks against the clergy and the press.

We underline that such acts have been duly documented by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and, more recently, by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, among other independent specialized agencies. We highlight that the majority of anti-Government citizen protests have been peaceful. Nevertheless, we also regret that attacks against Government employees — Government party members and security force personnel — have been carried out.

Peru and the OAS Permanent Council have demanded the immediate cessation of violence and intimidation, including selective prosecution and arbitrary detention. We also call for the dismantling of paramilitary groups and for those responsible for human rights violations to be held accountable through fair trials. The OAS, pursuant to its founding Charter, as well as the American Convention on Human Rights and the Inter-American Democratic Charter — binding instruments to which Nicaragua is a signatory party — has urged Nicaragua and all parties to engage in dialogue with a view to generating peaceful and sustainable solutions, thereby strengthening democracy.

In order to contribute to that effort, the OAS has created a working group for Nicaragua, in which Peru is an active participant, alongside elevn other member States. The group has repeatedly expressed its willingness to engage in constructive dialogue with the Government of Nicaragua. Regrettably, that offer has thus far been rejected and the Government of Nicaragua has limited its cooperation with various entities of the inter-American and United Nations systems, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Peru notes with deep concern the ongoing status quo in favour of impunity, which has been forcing tens of thousands of Nicaraguans to seek refuge in neighbouring countries and could ultimately lead to new acts of violence, which must be prevented. Given that and the recommendations made by the Secretary-General in his recent report on the role of regional organizations in conflict prevention and resolution, we consider it appropriate that the members of the Council be duly informed and that they be able to express their support for OAS efforts to promote a peaceful and sustainable solution in Nicaragua. Once again, we urge the Government of Nicaragua to take advantage of the good offices available and to resume dialogue with all parties, within the framework of its internal order and the inter-American system and in accordance with international law and international human rights law.

In conclusion, we recall that Peru's commitment to peace, stability and democracy in our region, and in particular in Nicaragua, is neither new nor foreign to the history of the Council. Last century, in the 1980s, through the efforts of the so-called Contadora support group, Peru actively contributed to achieving sustainable, democratic and inclusive peace in Central America. Today we reaffirm our commitment to and solidarity with the brotherly Nicaraguan people, while reiterating our readiness to assist in finding peaceful and sustainable solutions and in continuing to consolidate Latin America and the Caribbean as a region of peace.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): As this is the first time I am taking the floor in the Security Council during the month of September, allow me to begin by warmly congratulating the United Kingdom on its presidency of the Council in August and wishing every success to the United States presidency. It can rest assured of the resolute support of France and on my support, in particular.

First of all, I would like to thank our two briefers, Mr. Gonzalo Koncke, Chief of Staff to the Secretary General of the Organization of American States, and Mr. Felix Maradiaga, former Secretary General of the Ministry of Defence of Nicaragua, for their very insightful briefings. I would also like to welcome the Nicaraguan Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Denis Moncada, to the Council.

Since last April, there have been more than 300 deaths and 2,000 injuries in Nicaragua as a result of the violent suppression of demonstrations and numerous incidents. Once again, the Council faces a crisis with potential regional consequences, in particular in terms of the movement of people, including refugees. It is clear that the Council has the responsibility to support and assist conflict-prevention diplomacy in this and other crisis situations, while maintaining a watchful eye on the situation, without ideology and in full respect for the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. France has had the opportunity, either in public or in private face-to-face meetings with the Nicaraguan authorities, to express its expectations for a peaceful settlement of the current situation. Today, I will focus on three aspects of the crisis that deserve our full attention.

The first and perhaps most urgent issue is an end to the repression. France calls on the Nicaraguan Government to put an end to arbitrary arrests, the excessive use of force and all pressure exerted on demonstrators, human rights defenders and persons critical of the Government, including through violent groups. In that regard, we strongly condemn the violence perpetrated by paramilitary units, in particular the kidnapping on 20 August of attorney Carlos Cárdenas Zepeda, and the intimidation and arrests of representatives of trade unions and human rights organizations. It is the primary responsibility of the Government to ensure the safety of its people and respect for their rights. All judicial proceedings against persons who have been arrested must be conducted according to the rule of law. If they are not, the Nicaraguan authorities will gradually lose all legitimacy and the stability of the Nicaraguan State will ultimately be undermined. More than ever, France believes that respect for fundamental rights is the cornerstone of legitimacy and political stability in Nicaragua and elsewhere.

My second point concerns national dialogue. France calls on the Nicaraguan Government to preserve the national dialogue process, which was launched under the auspices of the Episcopal Conference of Nicaragua. The national dialogue is essential to a peaceful and negotiated resolution to the current crisis and to progress in discussions on democratization and justice. We deplore the fact that it has stalled. It should be noted that the Civic Alliance for Justice and Democracy has officially requested the resumption of such dialogue and the Episcopal Conference has recently expressed its readiness to pursue its mediation work. It is now up to the Nicaraguan Government to take this opportunity to start a credible national dialogue process, without preconditions, with the aim of resolving the crisis peacefully.

Thirdly, a lasting improvement in the situation in Nicaragua will depend on close cooperation with multilateral organizations, primarily the Organization of American States and the United Nations. In that regard, France deplores the decision of the Nicaraguan authorities to request the departure of the mission of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights following the publication of its report on the situation in Nicaragua. We call on the Nicaraguan authorities to reconsider their decision and cooperate with the Office of the High Commissioner, in accordance with its mandate and independence. Such cooperation is essential to identifying those responsible and bringing them to justice.

France has therefore expressed its support for the establishment of an autonomous and independent international investigation mechanism, as recommended by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. The Special Monitoring Mechanism for Nicaragua, which was established in June, must, under the supervision of the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts, shed light on issues of extreme gravity. We also welcome the establishment of the Verification and Security Commission — to include 12 members of the national dialogue, representatives of the Church, the United Nations, the Organization of American States the Inter-American Commission and the European Union — to verify the establishment of conditions for peace in the country.

It is true that mechanisms for resolving the crisis not only exist but are within reach. We therefore strongly encourage the Nicaraguan Government to use them in order to return Nicaragua to the path of prosperity and political stability to which its people aspire.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands): First, let me thank Ambassador Pierce and her team for their effective and efficient presidency of the Council last month. Their time management was commendable. Secondly, we warmly congratulate you, Madam President, and your team on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. Let me assure you of the support of our Mission and of my personal support for your presidency in this ambitious month.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss the cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations with regard to the situation in Nicaragua. We thank Mr. Gonzalo Koncke and Mr. Felix Maradiaga for their valuable briefings.

Historically, warm relations have existed between the peoples of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and of Nicaragua. That is the premise of our continued engagement with Nicaragua and why we have had intense conversations with Minister Moncada about our deep concerns with regard to recent developments in Nicaragua. We welcome Nicaragua's Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Council today and believe that dialogue is a crucial element of prevention. We thank him for being here with us.

I will focus on three issues today: first, our concerns about the situation in Nicaragua; secondly, the issue of prevention and, thirdly, support for mediation efforts.

My first point involves our concerns about the current situation. The Kingdom of the Netherlands is deeply concerned about unfolding events in Nicaragua since 18 April. More than 350 people have been killed and more than 2,000 people have been wounded since then. The Government has not protected its civilians. It has not guaranteed the right to peaceful protest. It has not protected freedom of the press. On the contrary, there have been many serious human rights violations, including the disproportionate use of violence, extrajudicial killings and disappearances. According to reliable sources, a majority of those crimes has been perpetrated by Government officials, para-police groups and armed third persons. We are specifically concerned about the violence, repression and arbitrary detentions that have been taking place since the start of those protests. In addition, there are signs that access to health care for protesters has been obstructed, while more than 100 medical personnel have been dismissed. We have a simple message — the repression must stop.

That brings me to my second point: the issue of prevention. We welcome the fact that we are discussing the situation in Nicaragua in the Security Council today, and we see this as an opportunity for dialogue. We therefore welcome the briefing by Mr. Maradiaga, and we look forward to the statement to be delivered by Minister Moncada. Early warning and conflict prevention are important priorities for the Kingdom of the Netherlands. We see a key role for the Security Council to play in conflict prevention by addressing root causes, such as human rights violations. The Council should therefore support preventive and mediation efforts with regard to the situation in Nicaragua, with a view to sustaining stability and promoting peace in the region.

That brings me to my third point: the role of local and regional organizations. In our view, the engagement of local and regional actors is essential to addressing the current crisis. We applaud the hard work of the Bishops of the Catholic Church in Nicaragua as mediator. We applaud the important efforts of the Organization of American States (OAS) to support the dialogue in Nicaragua. We also welcomed the early invitations by the Nicaraguan authorities to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights and the European Union to visit Nicaragua and support the dialogue.

However, the lack of progress regarding the dialogue is worrying. We regret the decision of the Nicaraguan Government to terminate the presence of the mission of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, which runs contrary to the spirit of dialogue and the principles of full accountability for human rights violations and securing justice for victims of violence. We expect the authorities to seriously consider the findings of the High Commissioner and to take urgent action to implement recommendations in his report. We urge the Nicaraguan authorities to fully cooperate with the relevant international organizations and to provide the necessary access to information. The independent investigation into human rights violations is paramount to a sustainable solution. Perpetrators of human rights violations must be brought to justice.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands, in that regard, supports the activities of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, as well as those of the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts of the OAS, which aim at strengthening Nicaraguan institutions and contributing to investigations into recent violent events. We urge Nicaragua to fully cooperate with the OAS and the United Nations.

I should like to conclude my statement in Spanish.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

We call on the Nicaraguan authorities to immediately cease the violence and to protect their citizens and their right to peaceful protest. We welcome and further encourage the firm engagement of the Organization of American States and other regional actors in addressing the current situation. We call on the Nicaraguan authorities to implement the recommendations made by the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights and by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights without delay, and in particular to take all the steps necessary to reactivate the dialogue on democratization and justice, which will pave the way to a sustainable peaceful solution to the situation in Nicaragua.

The President: I am quite impressed by the Spanish of the representative of the Netherlands.

Mr. Adom (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, let me to extend to you, Madam, my delegation's warm congratulations and wishes for your country's every success during its presidency of the Security Council for the month of September. I am also pleased to offer my delegation's thanks to Ambassador Karen Pierce and her entire team for the mastery with which they conducted the work of the Security Council, as well as for the relevance of the topics addressed during the month of August under the presidency of the United Kingdom.

I thank Mr. Gonzalo Koncke, Chief of Staff to the Secretary General of the Organization of American States, and Mr. Felix Maradiaga, civil society representative, for their briefings. I welcome the presence among us of Mr. Denis Ronaldo Moncada Colindres, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua.

Since April, Nicaragua has been in the throes of sociopolitical demonstrations that hardly seem to have let up. The vicious cycle of repressed social protests has left more than 300 people dead and led to the displacement of more than 23,000 Nicaraguans to neighbouring Costa Rica, where shelters are struggling to cope with the increasing flow and needs of refugees. The dialogue for peace between the Government and civil society, led under the auspices of the Episcopal Conference of Nicaragua with a view to achieving a peaceful solution to the crisis, has yet to achieve the hoped-for results. Mutual mistrust between the Government and civil society organizations has spread to the Episcopate, which the Government is accusing of bias by favouring the protesters, thereby adding to the complex nature of the situation.

The urgent calls of the international community for the immediate cessation of violence — a prerequisite for establishing an environment conducive to the resumption of the sociopolitical dialogue — have gone unanswered. In that regard, the recent expulsion from Nicaragua of members of the mission of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights does not bode well. Concerning the current stalemate and the ongoing deterioration of the sociopolitical situation, Côte d'Ivoire would like to express its deep concern about the risks associated with the deteriorating conflict, the long-term humanitarian consequences of which — although it is internal in nature at present — could be unprecedented for Nicaragua and neighbouring countries. My country therefore urges the Government and civil society organizations to renounce violence and resume negotiations without delay for a peaceful resolution of the crisis in the best interests of the people of Nicaragua.

The recent history of humankind reminds us of many instances in which what were initially low-intensity crises developed into armed conflicts with various and often tragic humanitarian consequences. Such tragedies, which continue to shake our collective conscience, have arisen owing to the obstinacy of the parties concerned in failing to recognize the gravity of the situation in their country, on the one hand, and, on the other, to a lack of interest and adequate reaction on the part of the international community. As preventive diplomacy is unanimously accepted as the most effective means of conflict prevention and management, my country urges the United Nations and the Organization of American States to use the range of tools available to them in the framework of a preventive approach so as to establish a constructive dialogue with and among all the actors in the crisis in Nicaragua.

That is the gist of our support for the proposal made by members of the Council to include the Nicaraguan issue on the programme of work for September. My country therefore echoes the call made by Secretary-General António Gutteres for an immediate end to the violence and the resumption of inter-Nicaraguan political dialogue — the only guarantee for a lasting return to peace and stability.

In conclusion, Côte d'Ivoire remains convinced that a return to a peaceful situation in Nicaragua will be possible only if Nicaraguans themselves are willing and committed to take ownership of existing mechanisms to assuage tensions within Nicaragua and the subregion. In our opinion, it is imperative for the Council to support them in that regard.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): I thank you very much, Madam President, for convening this meeting. I offer you our full support during your presidency in September. Allow me, as well, to thank our briefers, Mr. Gonzalo Koncke and Mr. Felix Maradiaga, for their briefings. I also welcome among us His Excellency Mr. Denis Moncada Colindres, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua.

Just a week ago, we discussed mediation and the peaceful settlement of disputes in this Chamber (see S/PV.8334). More than 70 Member States reaffirmed their commitment to preventive diplomacy and the peaceful settlement of disputes, whether inter-State and internal conflicts. Therefore, let me just remind members of the Security Council that we strongly agree with the Secretary-General's policy of prioritizing conflict prevention and addressing the root causes of conflicts before they escalate and have an irreversible impact.

It is our responsibility, as members of the international community, to not turn a blind eye to crises, such as the one occurring right now in Nicaragua. Instead of shying away, we need to see — just as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights calls us to see in its recent report on Nicaragua — the current situation in a broader context and realize what possible consequences it might provoke in the region.

Poland is deeply worried about the recent developments in Nicaragua. We are concerned about the repression and violence, which have resulted in hundreds of deaths and thousands of injured. The Nicaraguan authorities must fully respect and comply with the applicable human rights standards regarding the right to peaceful assembly and freedom of speech. There is no justification for the excessive and disproportionate use of force against peaceful demonstrators, just as there is no justification for the harassment and intimidation of civil and political activists.

Regional organizations can often prove themselves far more efficient in mediation. Their geographical proximity to the actors involved in conflicts leads to the deeper comprehension of the specificity of a particular problem, and they are better prepared to identify key nuances that we might simply overlook. They also demonstrate an excellent ability to lay the foundation for more profound and sustainable reconciliation.

That is why Poland takes note of the efforts undertaken by the Organization of American States (OAS) to resolve the crisis, followed by attentive monitoring of the situation. We would like to express our strong support for the work that is carried out by the OAS, and we hope that the inclusive and fruitful dialogue, with the participation of the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts for Nicaragua, will commence. At the same time, we are very concerned that the parties so far have demonstrated little will or ability to participate in such a dialogue. We encourage the conflicting parties to take up an open and genuine dialogue, start cooperating with the OAS and take advantage of the forum it offers. If they are unwilling to do so, perhaps a need for an external peace broker or dialogue facilitator should be recognized.

We have to once and for all leave behind the delusion that we have the luxury of time to spend on

discussions or deliberations. Given the high stakes in this case — such as the lives of our Nicaraguan friends — time is a comfort we simply cannot afford. Therefore, we call upon the Nicaraguan Government to not perceive the discussion we are having today as an attempt to stigmatize its country. We believe that our meeting is not about any sort of blame game or pointing fingers, but rather about acknowledging the gravity of the problem and offering a helping hand in solving it.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): My delegation congratulates you and your team, Madam President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of September, and conveys our felicitations to our United Kingdom colleagues for their able stewardship of the Council last month.

At the outset, we would like to thank our briefers for their interventions. We also welcome the presence of Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua Dennis Moncada Colindres.

Kazakhstan is closely monitoring developments in Nicaragua. We acknowledge the right to peaceful assembly and condemn all acts of violence and attacks on civilians. We express our deepest sympathy and condolences to the families of those killed.

We firmly believe that the Government and the people of Nicaragua will be able to overcome the current situation and find a solution to the problems for the sake of peace and security, with due respect for fundamental rights and freedoms. Such a solution should be peaceful and democratic and found within the framework of the Constitution, in particular by promoting dialogue between the country's political actors. We also believe that all stakeholders should refrain from violent or provocative actions.

We note with satisfaction that the level of tension in Nicaragua has decreased and the situation is gradually normalizing. We positively commend the launch of the national dialogue in Nicaragua, with the mediation of the Catholic Church, which is called upon to develop an algorithm for resolving existing problems in the interest of ensuring the sustainable development of the country.

Kazakhstan is a firm proponent of the preventive diplomacy principle, but is against external influence in the internal affairs of independent countries under that pretext. Kazakhstan is strongly committed to the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of other States.

The situation in Nicaragua does not constitute a threat to international peace and security, and therefore should not fall under the mandate of the Security Council. At this stage, the United Nations involvement should be only through the mediation efforts of the Secretary-General's good offices.

Lastly, we believe that stronger engagement and respectful cooperation by regional organizations, particularly the Organization of American States, in resolving the situation would be a crucial step towards the normalization of the political situation in Nicaragua.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): I extend congratulations to you, Madam President, and the United States for assuming the presidency of the Security Council. We offer our respect, gratitude and admiration to the United Kingdom for the way it presided over the Council last month.

I would like to thank Mr. Gonzalo Koncke from the Organization of American States (OAS) and Mr. Felix Maradiaga for their important briefings to the Council this morning, and also acknowledge the presence of Foreign Minister Moncada Colindres at the Council this morning.

Both the OAS and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) have reported on the unfolding of the human rights crisis in Nicaragua. Hundreds have been killed. There are worrying reports of targeted violence and persecution of peaceful protesters and human rights defenders, as well as of incidents of torture and sexual violence against detainees. Accounts of the existence and use of armed elements loyal to the Government — or so-called shock forces and mobs — are particularly alarming. The crisis has potential regional implications, and needs to be addressed in a spirit of preventive diplomacy. The Security Council's role is, first and foremost, to support those efforts.

We urge the Government to revive national dialogue with all the parties concerned, including the opposition, civil society and human rights defenders. Women's participation in that dialogue is crucial. That is the only way to ensure a peaceful solution to the current crisis.

We condemn all violence, including from protesters. The Nicaraguan authorities must act in accordance with international human rights law. Protests that are peaceful should never be hindered, and violence against

those who use their right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly can never be justified.

Regional and subregional organizations are key to preventing emerging crises from evolving further, as everyone has said today and the briefings illustrate. We commend and support the OAS for its role in promoting a peaceful solution to the situation in Nicaragua. In that regard, we call on the Government to fully engage with the OAS, as well as with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

The United Nations also has an important role to play in supporting a peaceful solution to the crisis, not least in supporting regional efforts and with preventive diplomacy. We regret the expulsion of the OHCHR mission last week, and hope that they will be invited back without delay. We welcome the Secretary-General's efforts and encourage him to continue to stay actively engaged. The European Union will continue its dialogue with all parties and actively support efforts of the broader international community.

Sweden has long-standing and friendly relations with Nicaragua. We are fully committed to supporting the country in finding a peaceful solution to the current crisis. Resuming inclusive, meaningful national dialogue, reinvigorating democracy, restoring the rule of law, respecting human rights and re-engaging with the international community, including the United Nations and the OAS, will be crucial to that.

Ms. Guadey (Ethiopia): We thank Mr. Gonzalo Koncke, Chief of Staff to the Secretary General of the Organization of American States, and Mr. Felix Maradiaga for their respective briefings. We would also like to welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua, His Excellency Mr. Denis Moncada Colindres.

We have been following the developments in Nicaragua. Since we are not from the region, we do not claim to have knowledge and/or expertise of the unfolding situation, but we have listened very carefully to the different views that have been expressed.

We maintain that, when it comes to issues related to our region, and Africa as a whole, the views of the countries concerned, as well as the region and the continent, need to be fully considered. Past experiences have shown that international engagement in any situation, including by the United Nations, can be effective and meaningful only if it is carefully calibrated and coordinated with regional efforts.

When it comes to the situation in Nicaragua in particular, we have not seen any indication that convinces us that it constitutes a threat to international peace and security. That is the basis for any involvement by the Security Council, as provided for by the Charter of the United Nations. We are concerned by the increasing violence in the country, but at this stage the situation remains an internal matter of Nicaraguans, which needs to be addressed through genuine dialogue and negotiation among the political stakeholders to find a peaceful solution to the crisis. We appreciate and support the ongoing efforts in that direction.

We know the history of the region and the sensitivities surrounding any perceived external involvement from outside the region. That is why there is a need for caution in handling the situation in Nicaragua. We understand that some members think there is a case for preventive diplomacy. It is indeed very important that every possible effort be made to prevent the situation from getting out of hand. We know that is best done discretely through the deployment of good offices. Otherwise, there is a possibility that such action may send the wrong signal to the Nicaraguan stakeholders and undermine the ongoing dialogue process.

We are aware that the Secretary-General has already been approached to assist, and we note his readiness to do so. That, in our opinion, is the best way forward. We hope that kind of constructive engagement will continue with a view to de-escalating the political tension and finding a peaceful solution to the crisis.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate Ambassador Karen Pierce and the delegation of the United Kingdom for their very successful presidency of the Security Council in August. We also wish you, Madam President, and your delegation success during your presidency, and we guarantee you all the necessary support from the delegation of Equatorial Guinea.

Allow me to welcome to this meeting His Excellency Mr. Denis Moncada Colindres, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua. I also thank Mr. Gonzalo Koncke, Chief of Staff to the Secretary General of the Organization of American States, and the representative of civil society, Mr. Felix Maradiaga, for their comprehensive briefings, which have provided a very timely and detailed explanation of the situation in Nicaragua.

Over the past decade, we have witnessed numerous situations that have resulted in death, injury and other

atrocities as a result of civil war and acts of terrorism, where the devastating effects of weapons have become a reality, leaving victims in many parts of the world.

In accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, we, the Member States, entrust to the Security Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and we agree that, in carrying out its functions under that responsibility, the Council act on our behalf. Such a task, in spite of all the difficulties, continues to be vigorously undertaken.

In view of the continuing threats to international peace and security, the action of the Security Council, although notable in many areas, needs to substantially and significantly improve, envisaging what is set out in Chapter VIII of the Charter, which defines the mechanisms and means necessary for interaction among the Security Council and regional and subregional organizations, in order to strenthen the prevention, management and peaceful settlement of conflicts. Our Government recognizes, appreciates and greatly values the concern of both the Security Council and regional and subregional organizations in the face of any threat to international peace and security.

In Nicaragua's case, our Government expresses its great concern about the political crisis that began in the country in April and the popular uprisings that are taking place in several cities of the country, which are led by students and supported by workers, professionals and entrepreneurs. Such events have claimed hundreds of lives and led to numerous injuries, considerably affecting the socioeconomic situation of the country, as illustrated in the briefings we have just heard.

The Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea recognizes the right of citizens to demonstrate, which is also recognized by the Nicaraguan legal system. Such demonstrations must be peaceful expressions of the population and their convening, development and conclusion must be regulated by the law, while also respecting the rights of those who do not support them.

We are convinced that any differences must be resolved through an ongoing quest for a peaceful solution, through consultation and dialogue, always in accordance with the principles of international law and in accordance with absolute respect for human rights. We therefore urge the parties to continue the national dialogue and, to that end, seek the support of international organizations to act as mediators.

I should like to conclude my statement by, on the one hand, encouraging the international community — in particular the Organization of American States and the Catholic Church — to continue its constructive mediation role so as to establish the necessary external conditions to facilitate consultations, dialogue and agreement to avert a deterioration of the situation and help the parties find a negotiated solution and, on the other hand, by calling on the Government of Nicaragua to open up to the international community and facilitate the putting in place of the mechanisms needed for a resolution of the serious political crisis the country is experiencing. That is how we truly believe we can address the situation in Nicaragua, and not by including it on the programme of work of the Security Council.

Mr. Llorentty Soliz (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, allow me to join in the expressions of gratitude and congratulations to Ambassador Pierce and her team on their steering of the presidency of the Security Council last month. I also wish you and your delegation, Madam President, the greatest success this month.

It is also a privilege for me to join in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Denis Moncada Colindres, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua, a fraternal country. I also wish to welcome someone whom I consider as a personal friend, Mr. Gonzalo Koncke, Chief of Staff to the Secretary General of the Organization of American States.

I take the floor to reiterate our rejection of the holding of today's meeting in the Security Council. This is a place for considering matters related to threats to international peace and security, and Nicaragua does not constitute any kind of threat to the region or the world. The members of the Security Souncil, in particular its permanent members, have the responsibility of avoiding turning this organ into an instrument for political or ideological ends. We therefore think it absurd that, under the theme "regional and subregional cooperation", our attention is being drawn to the internal situation of a Member State of this Organization.

Likewise, Bolivia believes that the argument for addressing the situation in Nicaragua today under Article 34 of the Charter of the United Nations is not applicable, for no dispute or situation is being investigated that could lead to international friction or give rise to a dispute whose continuance could

endanger the maintenance of international peace and security, since at present the reality in Nicaragua is relatively calm.

Along the same lines, in accordance with Article 54 of the Charter of the United Nations, regional bodies shall keep the Security Council informed of activities undertaken or being contemplated under regional arrangements for the maintenance of international peace and security.

None of those conditions are met when one considers the situation in Nicaragua.

By way of a review of the events, the mobilizations in Nicaragua took place in April and May. The Nicaraguan State resorted to legal and constitutional domestic mechanisms to pacify the country and called for a national dialogue with the mediation of the Catholic Church, all with the primary aim of pacifying Nicaragua and identifying and bringing to justice those responsible for fanning and perpetrating the violence.

All of us are aware of the regrettable toll of hundreds of people killed or wounded. We are convinced that, with the efforts by Nicaragua's democratic institutions, those responsible will be duly identified, tried and punished to the fullest extent of the law.

Bolivia opposed the holding of this meeting based on the Charter of the United Nations, which clearly establishes the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of Member States. We also oppose the manipulation of agenda items whose legitimate purpose is to support cooperation mechanisms with regional organizations to serve as an umbrella under which everything can fit.

We oppose the manipulation of the Secretary-General's strategy for preventive diplomacy for purposes far removed from helping to alleviate a crisis situation, which in fact serves to make the situation worse by trying to put a Member State on the stand as accused and giving the right to take the floor to persons who represent only a single point of view on the conflict. This approach undermines multilateralism, saps the momentum of preventive diplomacy, puts dialogue between the parties further out of reach and violates the principles of sovereignty and equality among States.

Not to agree with the representative of the United Kingdom when she referred to history, but history is indeed very important. Not only does it make it possible for us to have perspective on what is happening, but it lets us learn relevant lessons. Regrettably, Nicaragua's history over the course of almost two centuries has been marked by the interventionist obsession of the United States. It is worth mentioning the lunacy of the incursion by the mercenary William Walker who, supported by American businessmen and politicians, invaded Nicaragua militarily and proclaimed himself President of Nicaragua in 1856. Mercenary invasion was followed by military invasion when the United States Marines invaded Nicaragua in 1912, where they remained until 1933 when the rebellion of Augusto César Sandino managed to expel them from the country. Later, the United States left in power the national guard headed by Anastasio Somoza — one of the cruellest dictatorships ever in Latin America — who governed for the benefit of himself and his family for more than 40 years, with the full financial, economic and military support of that country. When, in 1979, the Sandinista National Liberation Front finally managed to defeat the Somoza dictatorship, the United States intervened again, arming and supporting the contras and sabotaging the Nicaraguan economy until it almost destroyed it.

That is why history is important.

It could be said that there has not been a moment in its history in which Nicaragua has not been subject to intervention, abuse, interference and threats. In fact, as the representative of the Russian Federation aptly reminded us, in 1986 the International Court of Justice, one of the main organs of our system, found the United States responsible for

> "training, arming, equipping, financing and supplying the contra forces, to the detriment of the Nicaraguan republic ... infringing upon the obligation incumbent upon it under customary international law not to intervene in the affairs of another state".

Interventionism, interference and the financing of opposition groups constitute the big elephant in the room that is not discussed in this Chamber. The real interest of the United States is not the defence of democracy; were it so it would not employ double standards or give speeches about defending democracy while at the same time financing coups d'état and destabilizing democratically elected Governments.

The real interest is not in defending human rights; otherwise States claiming to do so would sign all the international agreements under our system

on defending and promoting human rights. If human rights were the real reason, the United States would not have abandoned the Human Rights Council, one of the greatest achievements of our system. If it were really about human rights torture would not be promoted and asylum seekers would not be put in jail, giving rise to the inhumane separation of parents from their children.

The recent history of interventionism is a long one. We need only consider what happened in regions such as the Middle East. As we have said on many occasions, in Libya, Syria and in Iraq these policies have created the worst situations in this century. What is the true interest? The true interest is to promote situations of instability and to exploit them to change regimes and to control natural resources. That is the key objective.

We listened closely to the briefing given by the Chief of Staff to the Secretary General of the Organization of American States, and we agree with him on several of the issues, including with respect to the fact that it is not just Nicaragua but all countries of our region and the world that need democracy, justice, truth and peace. To that I would add that, in addition to democracy, justice, truth and peace, it is absolutely essential that States be free of interference and interventionism. How many millions of dollars have been earmarked to finance opposition groups in Nicaragua? What is the source of those millions of dollars to finance instability in countries such as Nicaragua? Moreover, in speaking of the multilateral system, we also need to consider the enforcement of unilateral sanctions, which are violations of international law.

If the international community truly wishes to help Nicaragua to resolve its problems, it must do so in the framework of the Charter of the United Nations. It must respect Nicaragua's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, while also condemning any interference, interventionism or policy of regime change. The response to the problems of Nicaragua must be provided by the Nicaraguans themselves within the framework of the rule of law.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the outset, I should like to congratulate you, Madam President, and your team on assuming the September presidency of the Security Council. I also thank the United Kingdom for its work in the presidency of the Council in August.

China has consistently called for respect for countries' sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity, as well as for adherence to the principle of non-interference in internal affairs. China is of the view that the situation in Nicaragua does not constitute a threat to international peace and security and that the Security Council should not get involved.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United States.

One month ago, I stood on the Simón Bolívar International Bridge that connects Venezuela with Colombia, and watched an unending line of desperate people trying to escape tyranny. The irony and the tragedy of this bridge should not be lost on any of us. Named for a great liberator, the Simón Bolívar International Bridge is now an escape route for a people starved and imprisoned by a dictator.

But there is also a lesson in the thousands of Venezuelans who cross the Simón Bolívar International Bridge every day. Fundamental human rights are denied when a man's ability to feed his family is destroyed. Human rights are denied when a woman loses her voice in determining her own future and when human rights are denied. The violence and instability that follow spill over borders. One nation's crisis becomes a region's crisis — even a global crisis. This process is well advanced in Venezuela. To those who say that this is only a matter of Venezuelan internal affairs, I would say: "Tell that to the people of Colombia. Tell that to the people of Peru. Tell that to the people of Brazil. And tell that to the people of Ecuador". We are long past the point at which the narco-State of Venezuela stopped being a Venezuelan security problem.

And now we are seeing the start of this disastrous cycle in Nicaragua. The spread of tyranny follows a predictable pattern. Media and opposition parties are silenced. Corruption chokes off economic opportunity. Institutions that people rely on outside the State, such as universities, trade unions and the church, are attacked and demonized The regime unleashes its militants to kidnap, torture and execute dissidents. The dictator hides behind those forces that terrorize and surveil their neighbours — all at the regime's instruction and on its behalf. And when the people inevitably rise up in protest, they are met with more violence, more imprisonment and more death. Then the exodus begins.

All of this has already happened in Venezuela. All of this is now happening in Nicaragua. Daniel Ortega has adopted the tactics of the dictators he once claimed to oppose. We should not be surprised.

Daniel Ortega and Nicolás Maduro are cut from the same corrupt cloth. They are both students of the same failed ideology, and they are both dictators who live in fear of their own people. The Ortega regime has long controlled the media by ensuring that television and radio stations are in the hands of family, friends and corrupt allies. Ortega banned opposition parties and rigged the Nicaraguan Constitution to allow him three uninterrupted five-year terms, and he named his wife Vice-President to continue to hold the power and dominate Nicaragua when he passes from the scene.

In classic authoritarian fashion, Ortega is attempting to destroy the most respected institution that is rightfully standing up for the Nicaraguan people — the Catholic Church. Clerics have been attacked. Catholic charities have been looted. Churches have been desecrated. Now, he is clinging to power in an equally authoritarian fashion by killing, detaining and brutalizing anyone who dares to oppose him. According to the Nicaraguan Association for Human Rights, over 448 people have been killed and over 2,000 have been injured.

Predictably, the Ortega regime has unleashed its allied forces and turned citizens against citizens. Hundreds of the regime's opponents have been kidnapped, including six national dialogue student leaders who were taken just yesterday. Hundreds more have disappeared, and just last week he expelled the United Nations human rights delegation. All of the detained students and other political prisoners should be released immediately.

The result is the beginnings of the exodus of desperate Nicaraguans out of their homeland. Over 25,000 Nicaraguans have migrated to Costa Rica since the start of the crisis, with Honduras, Panama and Mexico also receiving Nicaraguan migrants and asylum seekers.

With each passing day, Nicaragua travels further down a familiar path. It is a path that Syria has taken. It is a path that Venezuela has taken. The Security Council should not and cannot be a passive observer as Nicaragua continues to decline into a failed, corrupt and dictatorial State, because we know where this path leads. The Syrian exodus has produced millions of refugees, sowing instability throughout the Middle East and Europe. The Venezuelan exodus has become the largest displacement of people in the history of Latin America. A Nicaraguan exodus would overwhelm its neighbours and create a surge of migrants and asylum seekers in Central America.

Today, the United States stands in solidarity with the people of Nicaragua, not just because we believe in fundamental human rights and expect them to be honoured, but also because our future is bound up with our neighbours in the Americas. Their prosperity is our prosperity, and their security is our security. On my trip to Colombia, I met with Venezuelan families who walked three hours in the blazing heat every day to cross the Simón Bolívar International Bridge for just a single meal — the only meal that they would have that day.

Nicaraguan families are not that desperate yet, but we know what is coming if nothing changes. We still have the opportunity to prevent history from repeating itself. We still have the opportunity to prevent tyranny from threatening peace and security. The Nicaraguan people are demanding a voice in their future. They are calling for the release of arbitrarily jailed protesters. They are calling for an end to the dictatorship. They are calling for their own freedom.

On 18 July, the Organization of American States (OAS) overwhelmingly adopted a resolution holding the Nicaraguan Government responsible for ongoing human rights abuses, and has since established a working group to consider the situation in Nicaragua. The OAS has shown great leadership in addressing the tragic developments in Nicaragua. The United States fully supports the efforts of the OAS.

For the sake of the people of Nicaragua, for the security of the region and for the respect for human rights that we are bound to uphold, I applaud the Security Council for adding its powerful voice to those calling for an end to tyranny in Nicaragua.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua.

Mr. Moncada Colindres (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): Nicaraguans love peace. We comprehensively strengthen security and promote and champion human rights. The Government and the people of Nicaragua defend the principles of independence, sovereignty and self-determination of peoples, as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations. As such, we call for and demand an end to all interventionist policies that

violate international law. There is consensus in the Security Council that Nicaragua does not represent a threat to international peace and security. That is why its inclusion on the agenda of this meeting is clear interference in the internal affairs of Nicaragua and a violation of the United Nations Charter and international law.

The reality, as recognized by the international community, including United Nations organs and agencies, is that our country has been a factor for regional stability, peace and security — with strong positive indicators of economic, political and social development, poverty reduction, gender equality and citizen security. It has been an example and a protective barrier in the fight against transnational organized crime, terrorism and drug trafficking activity in the region.

According to the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Nicaragua has shown an average sustained economic growth of 5.2 per cent in recent years, which has allowed it to almost double its gross domestic product. One of the most significant advances in Nicaragua is a sustained reduction of poverty. General poverty and extreme poverty at the national level have been halved in recent years, as recognized by various international organizations.

Nicaragua is party to human rights agreements and conventions and honours its commitments. The Council is not the appropriate body to address this issue. The topic of human rights should be discussed through constructive, non-confrontational and non-politicized dialogue, based on the principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity. Our people will continue to champion the peace, stability, security and progress that we have been building.

The people of Nicaragua has a right to live and progress in peace. It has the right to continue to make progress in eradicating poverty and to pursue its quest, in sovereignty and dignity, for sustainable development and a decent life for our people, without exclusion of any kind, in order to reach the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Our Government and people reaffirm their deep commitment to peace and therefore promote real dialogue among Nicaraguans. That is the path; that is the route that we are taking and the most effective dialogue there can be — dialogue within our people and within our family. That is the dialogue that the people of Nicaragua have built, and we will continue to ensure the peace, stability and progress of our country.

We thank the States members of the Security Council and our brother States that have recognized that Nicaragua poses no threat to international peace and security and that it does not deserve being included on the Council's agenda. That solidarity is consistent with the reality of our country and with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations.

We recall that the United States was condemned by the International Court of Justice in The Hague in 1986 for military activities, paramilitaries activities and acts of terrorism against Nicaragua. The people of Nicaragua and the international community waits for the United States to fulfil the terms of its conviction by compensating Nicaragua and ceasing all acts of aggression and interference. That is how the United States can respect the human rights of the people of Nicaragua.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Costa Rica.

Mr. Carazo Zeledón (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Costa Rica thanks the presidency of the Council for having convened this meeting on the situation in Nicaragua. We believe it to be appropriate, timely and necessary. The report entitled "Violations of human rights and abuses in the context of the protests in Nicaragua", issued by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, attests to the "systematic erosion of human rights" in that country. This meeting should give us the opportunity to find the way to guarantee the full respect of human rights in Nicaragua in order to maintain social peace and ensure sustainable regional peace.

We have listened carefully to the briefings of Mr. Gonzalo Koncke, Chief of Staff to the Secretary General of the Organization of American States, and Mr. Felix Maradiaga, to whom we express our gratitude. We paid close attention to the statement made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nicaragua, Mr. Denis Moncada Colindres.

The situation in the brotherly country to the north is a priority issue for the Nicaraguan people and for the Costa Rica, for everything that occurs in that small, interconnected geographical area has a direct or indirect impact on us and, similarly, on the entire

Central American region. Costa Rica cannot and will not be indifferent to the suffering and uncertainty of those whom we consider our brothers and sisters. Costa Rica has been consistent in expressing its concern about the deterioration of the rule of law and respect for human rights in Nicaragua. Since April, when the conflict began, we have expressed our dismay about the escalation of violence and repression, which, according to the report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, has already claimed hundreds of lives and led to a regrettable wave of serious human rights violations, thereby threatening the security and safety of thousands of Nicaraguans.

As we have stated and as the report reflects, we believe that extrajudicial executions, forced disappearances, the obstruction of access to medical care, widespread arbitrary or illegal detentions, ill-treatment and cases of torture and sexual violence in detention centres are all unacceptable. They have led to the systematic erosion of the human rights of the Nicaraguan people, as well as to the selective repression and intimidation of demonstrators and their families, students, journalists, social leaders, human rights defenders and mediators, among others. In line with international law, it must be recalled that each country has the primary responsibility to guarantee the security and protection of its inhabitants and, failing that, the international community must protect the human rights of those people.

For months we have seen the serious migration, social and economic repercussions, which have not remained confined to Nicaragua but have spread beyond its borders. The deepening of the political, social and economic crisis in Nicaragua, repression and lack of respect for fundamental freedoms and human rights on the part of the authorities could cause an unbridled escalation of the crisis, which would have a direct impact on the stability and development of the countries and peoples of Central America. Since the first set of student demonstrations, which were repressed with unusual violence, Costa Rica has experienced a considerable increase in refugee applications and migration flows from Nicaragua. The number of Nicaraguan migrants has increased considerably, including in particular vulnerable people seeking safety and better opportunities. The number of refugee applications has also increased — from four applications in January this year to 4,074 in August alone. In total, during the first eight months of this year, more than 12,830 refugee applications were received from Nicaraguan citizens.

As a country of destination, transit and origin that respects human rights, Costa Rica's priority has always been the protection, respect, dignity and safety of people. In order to meet those objectives, Costa Rican institutions have always responded responsibly, as it has in this case, in an orderly manner and in compliance with national and international standards. Similarly, since the beginning, we have worked closely with the relevant international organizations and United Nations agencies, such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration, among others, with which we maintain a close relationship and from whom we have received considerable support.

Our country wishes to reiterate its conviction that the path to committed and effective dialogue must be the solution to the political conflict that plagues the Nicaraguan people, with whom we share deep historical ties of neighbourliness, closeness and brotherhood. We urge the Nicaraguan Government to re-establish conditions that ensure that dialogue among all parties is possible. Given the current circumstances, Costa Rica cannot remain silent. We will continue to speak out in defence of a population subjected to arbitrary actions that constitute a breach of the obligations under various different human rights covenants and principles. Costa Rica urges a prompt response from the Nicaraguan Government and the international community to address the grave and unsustainable situation. We will continue to speak out until reason, good judgement and full respect for human rights return to Nicaragua.

Costa Rica reiterates its support for, and commitment to, actions promoted by the Organization of American States (OAS), which are now being presented to the Council. Our country welcomes in particular the adoption of resolution CP/RES. 1108 of the Permanent Council of the OAS, which resolves to

> "reiterate its vigorous condemnation of and grave concern over all acts of violence, repression, and human rights violations and abuses committed by police, parapolice groups, and others against the people of Nicaragua".

We echo the Permanent Council's request to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the Department of Electoral Cooperation and Observation, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for

Human Rights, the Secretary General of the OAS and the European Union to take steps to help curb the crisis in Nicaragua. We request the international community and the Security Council to urge the Government of Nicaragua to immediately cease its disproportionate use of force, comply with all the recommendations of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the current situation in Nicaragua and resume a serious dialogue, based on respect, commitment and trust — the only path to a consensus-based solution among Nicaraguans and for Nicaraguans.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Mr. Suárez Moreno (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, as a responsible member of the international community, has requested to participate in this Security Council briefing, with an unwavering commitment to preserving the Latin American and Caribbean region as a zone of peace, as agreed by the Heads of State and Government of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States in 2014.

Allow me first refer to the relevant procedures and, accordingly, express our rejection of the practice of exploiting items on the agenda of the Security Council, such as today's, so as to force us into addressing the domestic situations of sovereign countries. This constitutes a flagrant violation of the mandates of this organ and of the Charter of the United Nations itself, while at the same time it sets a dangerous precedent and once again attests to the arbitrary nature of this presidency. In that regard, Venezuela also rejects the Security Council's continued appropriation of topics, especially when dealing with matters such as that being addressed today, which in no way constitutes a threat to regional, much less to international peace and security. We therefore emphasize that the consideration of the situation in Nicaragua lies outside of the mandate of the Council, whose competencies are clearly conferred upon it under the Charter.

Venezuela welcomes the social peace and stability enjoyed by the brotherly Nicaraguan people today, after having fallen victim to a four-month wave of terrorist violence that was encouraged, organized and financed by external factors, with the aim of overthrowing the country's legitimate, constitutional and democratically elected Government. We nevertheless sound the alarm that the external aggression is continuing, including through interventionist initiatives imposed by the Organization of American States (OAS), an authority that, as expressed in the budget legislation allocating funds for the United States Department of State for the 2018 fiscal year, responds to the strategic interests of that country. That is why the spokesperson of that agency who spoke earlier is no more than a spokesperson for those interests, which exemplifies once again a flagrant violation of the principle of sovereignty and the right to self-determination of peoples, enshrined in the founding Charter of the Organization, which seems to place an obstacle in the way of the imperial domination of various United States Administrations.

As we have always done, we insist that the norms of international law must be respected. The purposes and principles enshrined by the Charter must be upheld. The peaceful resolution of conflicts must be encouraged and multilateralism maintained. Unilateralism is contrary to the maintenance and building of peace, to which the signatories of the Charter committed themselves. The Nicaraguan people have the wisdom and necessary tools under their national Constitution, inter alia, to resolve their internal affairs and decide their future as a sovereign country without interference of any kind.

The treatment to which Nicaragua has been subjected is very similar to that accorded to Venezuela. Let me give several examples.

Is it not true that United States officials threaten OAS member countries to vote against Venezuela and Nicaragua in that regional forum? Is it not true that Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, the Director of the United States Central Intelligence Agency at that time, said in July 2017 that he had worked with the Governments of Colombia and Mexico to promote a transition in Venezuela? Is it not true that former Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said in August 2017 that he was creating the conditions for a change of Government in Venezuela? Is it not true that in August 2017 President Donald Trump threatened Venezuela with a military intervention? Is it not true that in August of 2017 Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said that the Government of the United States of America is doing everything possible to harm Venezuela economically?

Is it not true that in February, former Secretary of State Rex Tillerson openly called for a military revolt in Venezuela? Is it not true that in May, Madam President, you said that the time had come for President Maduro to

leave, which you reiterated in August on the Colombian-Venezuelan border. Is it not true that in Brazil, in June, Vice-President Mike Pence said that the time had come to take firmer and additional actions to isolate Venezuela? Is it not true that in July, the United States Agency for International Development acknowledged that the United States Embassy in Caracas was encouraging the Venezuelan opposition? Is it not true that in August the White House Spokeswoman threatened Venezuela, warning that all options were on the table? Is it not true that in August, following a meeting on Venezuela with National Security Adviser John Bolton, Senator Marco Rubio declared that the time had come for military intervention?

Is it not true that just this past weekend the representative of the United States to the OAS threatened the integrity of President Nicolás Maduro Moros if he attended the high-level segment of that organization, to be held in the coming weeks? Is it not true that in September the representative of the United States of America to the OAS advocated for a military attack by Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Peru against Venezuela, proposing that the pretext would be an alleged military clash on the borders shared by Brazil and Colombia with Venezuela? Is it not true that in September the United States representative to the OAS labelled as corrupt those countries of the Caribbean that had not joined the United States plan of aggression against Venezuela?

We now ask the honourable members of the Security Council: Who is the aggressor? Nicaragua? Venezuela? We are talking about empirical facts and not fake news, as the Administration likes to describe evidence. Venezuela reiterates its rejection of the manner in which some countries invoke the humanitarian pretext to use the Security Council as a tool to promote their policy of regime change that has caused so much damage to the peoples of Africa and the Middle East, while leading to a humanitarian crisis of a previously unimaginable proportions and fuelling xenophobia in the very countries that yesterday endorsed and applauded the Western invasions of Iraq and Libya under arguments that have proven to be false. Let us not be dragged back into the quagmire of history by one of the most obscurantist Administrations of recent times.

Lastly, since Ambassador Nikki Haley invoked his memory, in 1829 the liberator Simón Bolívar said that the United States seemed to be destined to plague all of the Americas with misery in the name of liberty. History has shown the judiciousness of his premonition.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.8341

Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8341st meeting

Wednesday, 5 September 2018, 3 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Cohen	(United States of America)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mrs. Cordova Soria
	China	Mr. Zhang Dianbin
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Ipo
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Esono Mbengono
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Kuwait	Mr. Almunayekh
	Netherlands	Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren
	Peru	Mr. Tenya
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Sweden	Mr. Skoog
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce

Agenda

The situation in Libya

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (S/2018/780)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

18-27652 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Libya

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (S/2018/780)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Libya to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Ghassan Salamé, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, to participate in this meeting.

Mr. Salamé is joining the meeting via video tele-conference from Tripoli.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/780, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Salamé and Ambassador Olof Skoog, Permanent Representative of Sweden, in his capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya.

I give the floor to Mr. Salamé.

Mr. Salamé: I would like to congratulate the United States of America on its presidency of the Security Council this month and thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to update the Council.

In each and every briefing I have given to the Council, I have stated that the status quo in Libya is untenable. The violence that consumed the capital beginning on 26 August shattered the façade of calm that had prevailed in Tripoli since May 2017. Tanks and heavy artillery were deployed into residential neighbourhoods. Sixty-one Libyans were killed and 159 injured. Many of those who died were civilians, including children. Families were forced to flee their homes. Looting and crime became commonplace as gangs took to the streets. Hundreds of criminals broke out of prison. Migrants were either trapped in detention centres or turned onto the street. The city stood on the brink of all-out war.

On 4 September, the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) brokered a ceasefire between the major parties to the conflict. That has effectively halted the fighting and started the restoration of some order to the city. The Mission is now working to protect that fragile peace and enable it to take root. As a first step, we are offering technical assistance and good offices in support of the ceasefire. Groups that violate the ceasefire must be held to account. The United Nations and the international community are watching each and every one of them. The time for impunity is behind us. We will not allow a repeat of 2014.

This outbreak of violence is but the latest in a series of crises that have engulfed Libya. The events surrounding the oil crescent region in June and July effectively threatened to split the country. In the past few weeks, the nation has lurched from one emergency to another.

On 10 August, armed groups forcibly evicted displaced Tawerghan families from the Tariq Al-Matar camp for internally displaced persons. Some Tawerghans were killed and injured. Homes were demolished and those Libyans were forced to flee, leaving them homeless for a second time in seven years. Despite the welcome return of several more families to Tawergha — totalling approximately 100 families by the end of August — basic infrastructure and services are still lacking, making a dignified return very difficult. We have warned all armed groups against any repetition of that totally unlawful behaviour. The forced displacement of people is unacceptable, and of those already displaced, doubly so. That was made clear to all those tempted by it.

After the horrendous attack on the High National Electoral Commission of 2 May, on 23 August the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) claimed responsibility for an attack near Zliten, which claimed the lives of four police officers. ISIL presence and operations in Libya are only spreading. I alert the Council of the possibility that Libya may become a shelter for terrorist groups of all persuasions and ask the Council to help address with that looming threat.

In recent weeks, the Chadian Government and Chadian opposition forces have been fighting one

another, operating from southern Libya. Over 1,000 fighters have been involved in the hostilities, risking the south becoming a regional battleground and safe haven for foreign armed groups. The recent agreement signed between Chad, the Sudan, the Niger and Libya needs to be implemented so that Libya does not also become an alternative battleground for others. The signatories have asked for support from the international community for the implementation of those agreements, and I hope that Council members will positively consider their requests.

In the eastern city of Derna, sporadic clashes and air raids continue. The United Nations is facilitating humanitarian assistance to affected families in the city. I reiterate my call upon all parties to exercise restraint and protect the lives of innocent civilians.

Abuse and exploitation abound within prisons and detention centres, which we continue to have great difficulty accessing, both in the east and in the west. Refugees and asylum seekers in detention centres have resorted to hunger strikes as a means to resolve their bleak living circumstances. That situation should, however, not be used as an excuse for any armed group to open the gates to terrorists and criminals interned or to displace them to other locations.

All the while, the citizens of the country suffer deteriorating standards of living, as they have for the past years. Now, for many, every day is a personal emergency.

We must not return to the status quo ante. In crisis lies the opportunity to tackle the underlying causes. To restore stability to Libya, there is an urgent need to establish strong and unified civilian and military institutions that work for the benefit of all citizens. The Mission is now focusing its work in two intertwined areas.

First, and in order to underpin the ceasefire, we are working to revise the security arrangements in Tripoli in order to reduce the influence of groups that use arms to achieve their parochial goals. In the coming days, UNSMIL will continue to hold broad consultations to strengthen the ceasefire and assist in the establishment of a monitoring mechanism. At the same time, we will continue to work with our Libyan counterparts to identify concrete steps towards reshaping security in the capital and developing more sustainable arrangements. UNSMIL will endeavour to facilitate that effort in an inclusive and pragmatic fashion, laying the foundations for longer-term efforts to stabilize the country through the reunification of the security sector institutions.

The previous security configuration empowered groups that acted in a predatory manner against the residents of the capital, against the State and against sovereign institutions. Indeed, members of some armed groups, nominally acting under the Ministry of the Interior, have kidnapped, tortured and murdered employees of sovereign institutions, including the National Oil Corporation and the Libyan Investment Authority.

Our public criticism of the predatory behaviour of armed groups in the capital was warmly welcomed by Libyans, who are fed up with living on the poverty line while their national resources are looted by gunmen turned millionaires. Our stand has produced a salutary impact in many cases. The State capture must end — not to the benefit of other armed groups, but with the full control of the legitimate authorities. The Council's support on that is crucial.

The Mission's second priority is to address the economic issues that underpin the crisis and erode the daily lives of citizens across the country. I would like to state plainly that if an end is not put to the plundering, there is little chance that we can move either the economic reforms or the political process. We urge action on the agreed upon economic reforms, which are essential and overdue. I call upon the Central Bank of Libya and the Government of National Accord to immediately move forward on currency exchange rate and subsidy reforms. We are also committed to advocating for a more equitable distribution of wealth in Libya, focused not on appeasing groups based on their military strength, but on providing for citizens based on their need.

UNSMIL believes that the request of Prime Minister Faiez Serraj for international support for a financial review is a valuable opportunity to bring transparency and accountability to how the country's wealth is managed. In response to the Security Council's request of 19 July to the Mission to provide suggestions on the modalities of such a review, I have been engaged with Libyan and international partners. I convened the Governor of the internationally recognized Central Bank of Libya in Tripoli and the head of the parallel Central Bank in the east for a meeting at the UNSMIL office to agree on the broad parameters of the review. On 24 August, the Secretary-

General submitted to the Council my proposals for how to proceed. That preliminary process has created hope, with many Libyans welcoming the meeting of the two officials — something that has not happened in the past four years. That was a first step towards unifying the Central Bank, which is a crucial step towards unifying the country.

When the political process grinds to a halt, some will believe that there is opportunity to force change through the barrel of a gun. The Libyan public has made a clear decision on how this change should come to pass — peacefully and democratically through elections. That was widely reflected during the national conference consultations, a report on which is currently being prepared.

It should come as no surprise that the Libyans want change in their political leadership. The members of the House of Representatives were elected over four years ago by around 15 per cent of the population. The members of the High Council of State, which represents a fraction of the members of the General National Congress, were elected six years ago. The members of the Government of National Accord assumed their roles not through elections but by appointment, and many of them have been inactive for a long while.

If national elections are to take place, a number of conditions must be met. They will require great effort to achieve, but they are achievable. The United Nations is working hard to put those conditions in place and thanks the international community for its support. Time and time again, the House of Representatives has promised to produce referendum and election legislation. After three sessions dedicated to the referendum law and numerous delays, the House of Representatives has failed to deliver that legislation. Those who have an interest in maintaining the status quo have spared no efforts to resist the needed change.

I will not mince words. Many members of the House of Representatives are failing to do their job. They seek to subvert the political process to their own ends, behind the guise of procedure. It is clear that they simply have no intention of relinquishing their positions. They have put in place legal provisions to maintain their authority in perpetuity. For the personal ambitions of a few, all Libya's citizens have paid a steep price. I welcome any rapprochement between the two Houses and take note of their recent meetings in Tripoli, but that activity must be directed towards advancing the political process, not towards ensuring their longevity.

In line with instructions from the Secretary-General, I have been exhausting the traditional avenues to move the legislative process forward. So far, they have either been blocked or designed to lead nowhere. If legislation is not produced soon, we will close the chapter on that approach. There are other ways to achieve peaceful political change, and we will embrace them with no hesitation but, indeed, with enthusiasm.

I am fully aware that the members of the Council are not mere spectators to the Libyan's crisis; members want it over as soon as possible. Their unified, determined and vocal position is what the Libyans need to hear if the citizens of that country are to enjoy the peace and tranquility that they are desperately looking for.

The President: I thank Mr. Salamé for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ambassador Skoog.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): In accordance with paragraph 24 (e) of resolution 1970 (2011) of 26 February 2011, I have the honour to report to the Security Council on the work of the Committee established by the same resolution. The report covers the period from 17 July to 5 September, during which time the Committee met once in informal consultations and conducted additional work via the written silence procedure.

During the informal consultations held on 23 August, the Committee heard a presentation by the Panel of Experts on its final report under resolution 2376 (2017) and discussed the recommendations contained therein. I will not summarize the report, as it will be published shortly. As per practice, Libya was invited to read the report, after discussion in the Committee and prior to publication, in the offices of the Secretariat.

Committee members expressed their support and appreciation for the work of the Panel of Experts. The main issues raised during the discussion included violations of the arms embargo; violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, including in the context of human trafficking and migrant smuggling; illicit exports of crude oil and refined petroleum products from Libya; and the implementation of the assets freeze. Of the 14 recommendations contained in the report, seven are addressed to the Security Council and seven to the Committee. Of the seven recommendations addressed to the Committee, the Committee agreed to take follow-up action on two. The

Committee requested additional written justification from the Panel regarding three recommendations. The remaining two recommendations require no Committee action at this stage.

With respect to the arms embargo, the Committee received a request for exemption, invoking paragraph 9 (c) of resolution 1970 (2011), from Malta. Consideration of that request is ongoing.

Concerning the measures aimed at preventing illicit exports of petroleum, including crude oil and refined petroleum products, the Committee received a vessel designation request. The Committee referred the matter back to the requesting State seeking some clarification and recalling the procedures contained in resolution 2146 (2014), as modified and extended by resolution 2362 (2017). The Committee also sent a letter to Libya seeking any information it may possess in relation to the matter.

With respect to the asset freeze, the Committee received a notification, invoking paragraph 19 (a) of resolution 1970 (2011), from the United Kingdom, regarding the legal expenses of a listed entity, the Libyan Investment Authority.

In connection with the travel ban, the Committee approved an extension to the exemption request submitted on behalf of Mr. Sayyid Mohammed Qadhaf Al-Dam, who had been authorized to travel from Libya to Egypt on the grounds of humanitarian needs. The Committee also approved an extension request submitted by Ms. Safia Farkash Al-Barassi, who had been authorized to travel from Egypt to Oman, on the same grounds.

During the period under review, the Committee received communications from the Focal Point for De-listing, established pursuant to resolution 1730 (2006), in connection with the de-listing requests, from the travel ban measures only, of Ms. Fakash Al-Barassi and Ms. Aisha Al-Qadhafi. The process of consideration of both de-listing requests is ongoing.

Lastly, I received a letter from the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005) concerning the Sudan, proposing the convening of a joint meeting with that Committee, as well as the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015) concerning South Sudan, to discuss the activities and presence of Darfuri rebels in Libya and South Sudan. A specific date for that joint meeting, which would be the second such meeting, is yet to be determined. The Committee also received an implementation report from a Member State.

The President: I thank Ambassador Skoog for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council who wish to make statements.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General not only for his very sobering briefing, but also for all his work on Libya. Through him, we would pass on our thanks to his team.

The first point I would like to make is to strongly condemn the escalation of violence in and around Tripoli that has caused many casualties and endangered the lives of innocent civilians. That does not help the Libyan people, and it also does not help the cause of Libya's stability. While the results of the mediation efforts reached yesterday in Tripoli by the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) are very welcome, we hope that they will help us to de-escalate the violence and ensure the protection of civilians. However, I think from what the Special Representative of the Secretary-General said, it is very clear that there is a lot more to be done and that there are a lot of underlying factors that really need to be tackled.

I want to set out our very strong support for the Special Representative. We need a durable cessation of hostilities in Tripoli. That is a critical step to advancing the political process, in accordance with the United Nations action plan. We call on all parties to cease hostilities and immediately abide by the ceasefire agreement brokered by the United Nations. We reiterate our support for the Presidency Council and the Government of National Accord as they work with the United Nations to promote reconciliation and a Libyan-led political process. That is underscored even more by the events in Tripoli. A more inclusive political statement would help bring greater stability to Libya. That is a truism, but the whole point of truisms is that they are correct. The Secretary-General's report (S/2018/780) of 24 August on UNSMIL rightly highlights the need for progress on the implementation of the United Nations action plan.

I also want to express the United Kingdom's support for elections this year. Elections are an important part of Libya's transition, but it will be necessary to ensure

that sufficient political security and that technical preparations be made, so that they have the effect of uniting Libya. It will be important to ensure that a robust legal framework is in place and that there is sufficient political consensus to avoid exacerbating existing divisions in Libya.

The counter-terrorism threat is, of course, a very important issue, but I just wanted to register our concern at the humanitarian situation in Derra, to emphasize the need to allow humanitarian access for the civilian population, and to say that those responsible for human rights abuses will need to be held to account. Based on that, we have a number of action points that we would like to call for today.

The first call is on all Libyan parties to refrain from actions that undermine the ceasefire announcement, jeopardize the security of civilians or set back Libyan efforts to advance the political process. The second is to call on the House of Representatives to deliver progress on a constitutional basis for the elections. What we heard from the Special Representative about the problem was frankly dismaying. Failure to sort that out will cause further stagnation and the only people who will lose are the Libyan people. We call on Libya's leaders to work together to address the suffering of the Libyan people while the election preparations are under way. They urgently need to agree economic reforms and unify Libya's economic institutions to ensure a more equitable distribution of wealth across the country. We also encourage progress on the Prime Minister's request to enhance transparency in the Central Bank of Libya.

Finally, I should like to say a word about oil. We welcome the resolution of recent events in the oil crescent, and we welcome the fact that Libya's National Oil Corporation is continuing its vital work on behalf of all Libyans. The priority now is to repair infrastructure, honour contractual obligations and, having lifted the state of emergency in eastern Libya, to restore oil exports and production.

It is very important that the Council remain in very close touch with the Special Representative, given the situation on the ground. We are very happy to do that if Council members would find it helpful. We are also ready to circulate a draft press statement.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ghassan Salamé, for his very clear and powerful briefing on the latest developments in Libya. I also want to thank the Swedish Ambassador for his briefing on the work of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011), concerning Libya.

First, I echo the sentiments of previous speakers in voicing France's alarm in the light of recent developments in Tripoli. For 10 days, the security situation in the Libyan capital has deteriorated sharply, with grave humanitarian consequences that risk jeopardizing the political process. The clashes are unacceptable. France has expressed its condemnation of the violence, both in its national capacity and alongside its partners, and called for the actors to put an end to them. We commend the efforts and commitment of the Secretary-General and of his Special Representative, which made it possible to reach a ceasefire yesterday. We are resolutely committed at their side and within the Council in order to ensure that the return to calm is both effective and lasting.

Secondly, countering all elements that jeopardize the fragile political balance and take advantage of the situation to ransack Libya's economic resources must remain our priority. The Secretary-General's report (S/2018/780) is crystal clear in that regard. The Special Representative has underscored that point on several occasions before the Council. Economic predation endangers the political, security and social balance in Libya. Moreover, the latest clashes in Tripoli seem to have been partially financially motivated.

The humanitarian situation is also a matter of concern, particularly the plight of migrants and refugees, who are victims of human rights violations. France therefore calls upon the Libyan authorities to do their utmost, in partnership with the internationa' community, to ensure that migrants and refugees are treated with dignity. This is a priority for the protection of human rights and the fight against organized crime, which will be more successful once a political settlement in Libya can strengthen Libya's national institutions. It is important that the international community reiterate that anyone who threatens Lybia's peace, security and stability will be subject to international sanctions, in line with the resolutions of the Council.

Thirdly, it is more important than ever to make headway in the democratic transition in Libya. At this sensitive time, it is all the more critical to unanimously reaffirm our support for Mr. Salamé's road map, as we did on 16 July (see S/PV.8312). The Libyan stakeholders

must work with the Special Representative to advance the political process without pushing back the deadlines on the pretext that situation does not allow for it.

Let us not deceive ourselves. The enemy of Libya and of Libyans is the status quo, for the status quo means an economy of predation and a playground for traffickers and organized crime, which are like a disease seeking to destroy our joint efforts in Libya. We cannot allow that, which is why it is essential to move forward along the clear path outlined by Mr. Salamé. In order to do so, it is critical to organize elections according to the timetable agreed on 29 May in Paris by the four key players on the Libyan political stage, who pledged before the international community to adopt a constitutional basis for the country and to hold presidential and legislative elections on 10 December.

Upholding those commitments is crucial if we are to escape the current stagnation, which only fuels instability. Libyans need progress and want elections. The enthusiasm for being included on the voter registry, as indicated in regular polls, is unambiguous. That is also the Secretary-General's first observation in the report under consideration today. Since the mandate of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) is soon to be renewed, France remains fully committed to supporting the implementation of the Special Representative's road map, particularly with regard to the preparation for elections. France will therefore back a one-year renewal of the UNSMIL mandate in order to build upon the current political momentum and to breathe new life into it. On behalf of France, I reiterate our full confidence in Mr. Salamé and pledge our full support to him. We also underscore the need for the Security Council to remain firmly united in backing his efforts and the efforts of the United Nations.

Mr. Esono Mbengono (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Republic of Equatorial Guinea expresses its thanks for the briefing presented by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), Mr. Ghassan Salamé. We take this opportunity to convey our unconditional support for the tireless discharge of his duties to bring about a unified, peaceful and prosperous Libya. We also thank the Secretary-General for his 24 August report (S/2018/780), and express our gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Olof Skoog, Permanent Representative of Sweden, for his briefing in his capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011), concerning Libya.

We wish to begin our statement by condemning the escalation of violence we have seen starting last week in Tripoli due to clashes among various armed groups. We are pleased that, thanks to the great efforts of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) under Mr. Salamé and the meetings held with the parties concerned, a cessation of hostilities agreement has been reached to put an end to the clashes, which have claimed dozens of lives, injured many, caused significant material damage and exacerbated the humanitarian situation. Consequently, we call on all parties to respect the agreement reached yesterday, 4 September, and to find lasting, peaceful solutions to ensure the security of the people of Libya and its institutions. Health and humanitarian aid personnel must be granted access in order to help the victims without risking their own lives. We therefore urge Libyan authorities to cooperate to that end.

We would be remiss if we did not express our condolences and respect to the people of Libya for the innocent lives lost during the clashes. We also wish to stress that the perpetrators of such acts must be inexorably brought to justice. Those events show the critical importance of carrying out the comprehensive implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement and the United Nations action plan for the country with a view to definitively bringing the long transition period to an end. Those instruments can hardly be implemented if the country continues to be fragmented into different factions, with various power centres, especially given the significant role of armed groups acting with total impunity and the influence of such groups in political and socioeconomic sectors, as well as the uncontrolled, illegal flow of weapons, despite the measures imposed by the Council. The parties to the conflict must refrain from taking actions that could exacerbate the already complex situation.

All of that leads us to what has been repeated on various occasions: Lybia's stability primarily requires reconciliation through direct, frank and inclusive dialogue among the parties. In that regard, we once again commend the work of UNSMIL in particular, as well as the African Union and the European Union, in the fervent hope that the presidential and parliamentary elections can be held later this year as planned and that Libya can re-emerge and restore normality with a view to securing a prosperous future. In order to achieve that,

the efforts to combat armed groups, smugglers, human traffickers and terrorist organizations must be ramped up, and the Government of National Accord given even greater support so that it can regain full control and the capacity it needs to govern in total autonomy and sovereignty, and enabling the Army to be unified, among many other measures.

In conclusion, we would once again like to highlight and condemn another worrying issue, which is the human rights violations that migrants and refugees are enduring on a daily basis in detention centres in Libya and at the hands of human-trafficking networks. Since it is such a lucrative source of income for these networks, the traffic in human beings bound to continue until the situation is brought to an end. We therefore call on the Council to act with urgency, proportionality and energy to solve the problem, which continues of be one of enormous concern for Equatorial Guinea. In the face of these problems, we believe it is vital to rethink the situation and take appropriate steps. We therefore want to say that Equatorial Guinea will support all well-founded, impartial and suitable proposals that can help to end all acts that constitute violations of human rights and international humanitarian law and are an obstacle to the restoration of peace in Libya.

Mr. Tenya (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We appreciate the convening of this meeting and the important briefings by Special Representative Ghassan Salamé and Ambassador Skoog of Sweden, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya.

Peru deplores the outbreaks of violence in Tripoli in the past few days, especially where they have led to the death of civilians, including children. We urge all the parties concerned to respect the ceasefire and protect civilians. We support the efforts and good offices of the Special Representative in that regard. We have been closely following the progress of the implementation of the United Nations action plan for Libya, as well as the efforts of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) to facilitate a political solution, led by the Libyans themselves, that will produce institutions capable of exercising authority over the entire territory.

In line with the presidential statement of 6 June (S/PRST/2018/11), we consider the Libyan Political Agreement to be the only viable framework for overcoming the current political stalemate among the main stakeholders, and in order to do that we want to emphasize the importance of improving the participation of civil society, especially women and young people. In that regard, we would like to highlight the role of the National Conference, promoted by the Special Representative, which has enabled the direct participation of more than 7,000 citizens in more than 40 cities, and has channelled their concerns and expectations in an open and inclusive dialogue. We look forward to his final report on that.

However, we have to express our concern about the lack of progress in realizing the changes proposed by the Political Agreement, owing to the stagnation in the negotiations between the House of Representatives and the High Council of State. It is essential that the parties make a good-faith commitment to reversing the situation. It will also be essential to continue working to ensure that the parliamentary and presidential elections scheduled for December take place as agreed on at the Paris conference. It is urgent that the relevant rules be adopted and the necessary security and financing guaranteed. We also want to emphasize the importance of mass participation by the country's citizens, particularly women and young people, as well as the various political forces' commitment to accepting the election results within the current legal framework and avoiding any deterioration of security in Libya. We also underscore how important it is that the international community and regional organizations maintain their support throughout the process.

On another topic, we note with concern the deterioration of the Libyan economy and its potential impact on the country's stability. If the conflict is to be overcome, a commitment on the control and the transparent and efficient management of the hydrocarbons that represent the country's main resources is essential. In that regard, we eagerly await the proposals that the Secretary-General has requested for improving Libya's financial institutions' transparency, unity and operation, based on some essential reforms that can ensure that the country's public resources are managed appropriately, transparently and efficiently. We believe that the Mission can use its good offices to promote those efforts, which should include independent audits and actions aimed at facilitating the legitimate Libyan authorities' financial control over the entire territory and its resources. It will be important to ensure that there is no repetition of the incidents regarding the control of oil terminals and increase security at production facilities. The international community

must also be firm and united in recognizing the legitimate representatives of the Libyan Government. In that regard, we would like to highlight the decisions agreed on at the economic dialogue in June, and we join the Secretary-General's call to the Libyan authorities to comply with the economic reforms agreed there.

Lastly, we must express our concern about the continuing reports of violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Libya. It will be crucial to address the vulnerable situation of the country's thousands of migrants, particularly women and children, and the unscrupulous activities of organized crime and its links to terrorist groups. In that regard, we want to support the Secretary-General's call for the closure of the detention centres and to salute the valuable work of UNICEF, the International Organization for Migration and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in their efforts to protect unaccompanied migrant children.

I would like to conclude by thanking Mr. Salamé for his work and reaffirming our support to his team and to UNSMIL as a whole in this historic context of defining the future of Libya.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): We thank Special Representative Salamé and Ambassador Skoog for their comprehensive updates on the situation in Libya and on the activities of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya.

Despite some positive steps undertaken by the Libyans, the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) and the international community, the violence and confrontations between the rival armed groups continue to grow. We are very concerned about the recent escalation in violence in and around Tripoli, which has resulted in many casualties among civilians, including children. In that regard, we would like to commend the successful mediation efforts of Special Representative Salamé and UNSMIL in facilitating a ceasefire agreement between the armed groups.

Such actions not only threaten the lives of hundreds of civilians, they also undermine the progress that has been made so far in implementing the United Nations action plan. The latest escalation of the situation once again proved how vital it is to immediately focus on the country's largely unaddressed structural political issues and on the multiplicity of armed actors on the ground with conflicting agendas, the most alarming of which is Libya's conversion into a centre for the activities of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, as the Special Representative said today. Every effort must therefore be made to build and strengthen State structures, the armed forces and the security sector, which in turn can enhance political stability. There is an urgent need to implement measures to improve the socioeconomic conditions that can have a positive impact on the political process and stability in the country.

My delegation fully supports the Secretary-General's observation in his latest report (S/2018/780) that while elections must be held in order to renew the mandates of Libyan institutions and establish a new executive authority, it is equally important that the proper conditions be in place. Establishing a secure atmosphere conducive to the successful holding of elections and enacting appropriate electoral legislation will ensure that the right conditions are created.

We call on all Libyan parties and stakeholders to maintain a strong commitment to the common goal of seeking a political settlement to the crisis. It will be vital to ensure that the authorities in Tripoli and Tobruk continue their engagement in order to resolve their differences through an inclusive dialogue and political means.

Lastly, the international efforts to advance political reconciliation in Libya should be consolidated under the umbrella of United Nations leadership. In that regard, Kazakhstan commends the Special Representative's efforts and encourages him to continue his engagement with a wide range of actors with a view to broadening their support and commitment to the political process. We in the Security Council should remain united and support his efforts to achieve a sustainable solution on the ground.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): I would like to thank Mr. Ghassan Salamé, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for his very informative briefing on recent developments in Libya. I also want to thank Ambassador Olof Skoog, Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya, for his presentation.

Let me begin by expressing my deepest condolences to those who have lost loved ones, as well as my wishes for a speedy recovery to those injured in recent clashes in Libya. We condemn the recent escalation of violence in and around Tripoli in the strongest terms, particularly the indiscriminate shelling by armed groups that resulted in killing and injuring civilians,

including children. We therefore call on all parties to the conflict to fully respect international humanitarian law, including by taking every possible precaution to protect civilians and ensure that the wounded and sick are cared for, including through medical evacuations. We remain concerned about the human rights violations and abuses that have been committed in the context of detention, as well as the prolonged arbitrary detention of thousands of men, women and children without due process. We therefore call for the closure of the detention centres and respect for the human rights of detainees. A zero-tolerance policy on torture, summary executions and killings in custody is a prerequisite for building a country based on the rule of law.

We call on all Libyan parties to cease hostilities immediately and abide by the ceasefire agreement brokered by the United Nations and the reconciliation committees. In that regard, we welcome yesterday's result of the mediation by the United Nations Support Mission in Libya designed to de-escalate the violence in and around Tripoli and ensure the protection of civilians. With regard to the political process, we welcome the strong engagement of Libyan women in political, peacebuilding, recovery and reconciliation efforts, commend the dedicated work that has been done to ensure their participation in the National Conference process and underline how vital it is to ensure their inclusion in the political process.

In conclusion, I would like to express my gratitude to Special Representative Salamé and the staff of the United Nations presence in Libya for their dedication and support to achieving a peaceful end to the transition in Libya.

Mr. Safronkov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Mr. Salamé for his objective briefing and support his efforts to implement the United Nations action plan approved by the Security Council and aimed at helping Libyans to unify their country and ensure its socioeconomic recovery. We realize that the differences among Libyans run too deep to expect rapid progress. We believe that the main prerequisite for the success of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya will be the ability to unite international efforts to achieve a settlement, which means refraining from competing political initiatives. And if agreements are reached, it will be essential to make every possible effort to implement them.

We are extremely concerned about the unfortunate developments in Tripoli over the past few weeks. The escalating situation was halted only thanks to the courageous efforts of Mr. Salamé and his team. The ongoing clashes have shown the pointlessness of the attempts to portray the situation in the capital as being stabilized. Owing to the force of these objective circumstances, the authorities in Tripoli continue to have extremely limited capabilities and have to rely on the dominant armed groups. Most unfortunately, unification of the security forces has still not begun, although it should be a priority. Even the widely proclaimed project to establish a so-called presidential guard has still not been realized.

We welcome Mr. Salamé's efforts to help the parties to the conflict reach a lasting agreement on a cessation of hostilities. We call on Libyans to stop the escalating violence and unite to restore and rebuild their country and combat terrorism. We call on external sponsors to work to unify Libya, encourage efforts aimed at centralization and to remember that Libya, with its rich history, culture and natural resources, belongs to its people alone. Outside actors should contribute to national reconciliation in Libya and the key coordinating role of the United Nations could be improved. We believe that every useful initiative deserves attention and support, but isolated political acts without a clear strategy are very unlikely to raise intra-Libyan reconciliation to a qualitatively higher level. Every step should be aimed at unifying the country on every possible level. Russia maintains contacts with all parties, encouraging them to seek compromises for the sake of peace and stability in Libya and the Mediterranean region. We support establishing a consolidated mechanism for external assistance in the settlement process, under the auspices and with the help of the United Nations.

We support the efforts to steer the political process towards the holding of general elections by the end of the year. Needless to say, we should bear in mind that favourable conditions are essential for that. Libyan society must be ready to enter the electoral phase, because if not, elections will only reopen old wounds and lead to a new cycle of confrontation rather than the desired reunification, inevitably complicating the political efforts of the United Nations.

We have been closely following developments in the vitally important oil sector, on which the well-being of Libya's citizens depends. Natural resources should be used for the benefit of every single citizen

of the country, not as pocket change in the geopolitical arrangements of other States. Issues pertaining to the control of oil infrastructure, export operations and the functioning of banking and financial institutions should be resolved by Libyans themselves through dialogue under the auspices of the United Nations. The participation of international financial organizations in these processes should be carefully considered and the position of the Libyan authorities taken into account.

The Secretary-General underscores in his report (S/2018/780) that support for the dignified and safe return of internally displaced persons is a key priority for the international community's humanitarian assistance to Libya, and we are in complete agreement with his position. There should be a similar approach in Syria, free of politicized attitudes.

We thank the Ambassador of Sweden, in his capacity as Chair, and his team for their professionalism in coordinating the work of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya. International restrictions are not an end in themselves but should rather contribute to the political process, which is why from now on we will take an extremely careful approach to sanctions measures that do not have obvious added value. We are concerned about the situation of migrants and refugees in Libya and the abuses of their rights, but a long-term solution to that problem is certainly not to be found through sanctions. For that, effective criminal prosecution has to be launched at the national level. International cooperation is very important, including within the framework of the relevant entities. No attention has been given to criminality in countries of destination for migrants. Lastly, we have not seen any serious attempts to deal with the root causes of these mass migrations, which originate first and foremost in dire socioeconomic situations and conflicts, including some provoked from outside. We must work on improving the situation in these regions, after which people will return to their homes of their own volition.

Libyans have been complaining for a long time about the significant losses they have sustained where their assets in foreign credit institutions have been frozen in accordance with Security Council decisions. The situation should be impartially evaluated in order to make the best possible decision without going beyond the existing sanction frameworks. Another ongoing pressing problem involves the illegal flow of weapons into Libya, which affects both its own security and that of the surrounding region. In the absence of a centralized State authority and a united army, talk about easing the arms embargo would be premature. Furthermore, the strictest possible control is required when delivering products for military use in Libya within the framework of existing exemptions, in order to ensure that they are not lost or misappropriated. Who wins when weapons or military technology fall into the hands of armed groups, foreign mercenaries or even terrorists, who are still present in Libya to this day?

Russia and Libya are linked in a historically friendly and mutually respectful relationship in many areas. We want to advance and deepen our cooperation with Libya, but if we are to stabilize it we must unite international and regional efforts as quickly as possible.

Mr. Almunayekh (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. Ghassan Salamé, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), for his valuable briefing. I would also like to thank the Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Sweden, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya, for his briefing on the Committee's work. My statement will focus on two main issues — developments on the security and political fronts, and economic developments.

First, with regard to security and politically related developments, the unfortunate recent escalation of the security situation in the capital has had negative repercussions for the regional and international efforts aimed at establishing norms governing security and stability in Libya. We are concerned about the escalation of military operations, including shelling and indiscriminate firing in populated areas, which have led to dozens of deaths, including of women and children, as well as many injuries. We call on all Libyan parties to halt the fighting immediately, commit to the ceasefire agreement mediated by UNSMIL, engage seriously and constructively in a dialogue to stop the escalating violence in Tripoli and its suburbs and thereby prevent further human losses. That will give the United Nations and other regional and international actors a sufficient opportunity to reach a lasting and comprehensive political agreement to the benefit of our brother people of Libya.

The Libyan situation on the ground is suffering from instability and a lack of security, and it is therefore

incumbent on the international community and the Security Council to step up efforts to permanently end the proliferation of armed groups, which can be done by supporting the establishment of unified, legitimate security institutions under the control and supervision of the State. That will help to promote the transitional and political processes based on the United Nations action plan and ensure that terrorist hotspots — such as those connected to Da'esh, which is exploiting the political and security vacuum to carry out its destructive schemes — are not increasing.

Turning to the United Nations action plan in Libya, we commend the role played by UNSMIL in organizing the National Conference, which brought together approximately 7,000 Libyan men and women from various parts of the country. They reached a consensus on the need to end the transitional period and unify various Government institutions by holding elections. We look forward to seeing the House of Representatives and the High Council of State conclude their discussions on the necessary amendments to the Libyan Political Agreement so as to address the concerns and aspirations of the Libyan people in their efforts to rebuild their State.

Secondly, with regard to economic issues, it is clear that the security problems in Libya in the second half of this year have been detrimental to the country's economic situation, with oil production declineing from 1 million to 315,000 barrels a day, owing to the armed confrontations in the oil crescent region. That in turn has affected the State's budget for 2018, adopted after an agreement between the Presidency Council and the Central Bank of Libya.

It is important to make every effort to bring about economic stability and development in Libya through the commitment of all the Libyan authorities to instituting fair economic reforms that can bring long-term gains, in line with the agreements reached by the Libyan parties participating in the eighth round of economic dialogues, held in Tunisia in June, which would empower the country's economic institutions to provide general services to the Libyan people. In that regard, we stress the importance of ensuring accountability on the part of Libya's financial and economic institutions in order to preserve the people's wealth. We commend Mr. Salamé's rapid response to the Security Council's request on the need to submit proposals aimed at unifying financial institutions in Libya in line with the United Nations action plan. That comes in the light of the letter to the Security Council from the Head of the Presidency Council, Mr. Faiez Serraj, on reviewing the state of the internationally recognized Central Bank of Libya in Tripoli and the Central Bank in eastern Libya.

In conclusion, we reiterate our support to Mr. Salamé's efforts to facilitate a comprehensive Libyan political process pursuant to the United Nations action plan. We urge all Libyan parties to work for a peaceful settlement through serious and constructive engagement at the technical, legislative, political and security levels needed to ensure the holding of transparent, comprehensive and peaceful elections, with a view to building a unified and stable Libya.

Mr. Zhang Dianbin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation thanks Special Representative Salamé and Ambassador Skoog, Permanent Representative of Sweden, in his capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya, for their briefings.

The security situation in Libya remains fragile. Terrorist forces are running rampant and the problems concerning refugees and migrants are acute. However, with the support of the United Nations, regional organizations and neighbouring States, Libya has made difficult but steady progress with its political transition. China has been closely following the latest developments in the situation in the country. We welcome the ceasefire agreement signed by the armed groups involved in the recent hostilities in Tripoli. We call on the relevant parties to immediately put an end the conflict, resolve their differences through dialogue and negotiations and continue to advance the political settlement process with a view to achieving reconciliation and stability as soon as possible. The international community should continue to step up its support to help Libya restore stability and effective governance as soon as possible.

First, we must stay committed to a path of political settlement for the Libyan question. The international community should respect Libya's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, and firmly advance the Libyan-owned and Libyan-led political process. All parties in Libya should commit to an inclusive dialogue with stakeholders from both national and local levels so as to build consensus, narrow differences and find solutions that are acceptable to all.

Secondly, we must build a better security environment in favour of the political process. Countries and organizations that have influence should play a dual role in engaging with the Libyan parties so that they will not resort to the use of force at the slightest provocation. It is through confidence-building measures that reconciliation can be achieved. A unified national security agency should be established at an early date to create favourable conditions for the implementation of the United Nations action plan. The Libyan parties should make greater efforts at dialogue, settle their differences, continue to foster mutual trust and cooperate in combating terrorism and organized crime.

Thirdly, we must strengthen the United Nations role and capacity to offer its good offices. China supports the Special Representative in leading the United Nations Support Mission in Libya to move forward the implementation of the relevant United Nations action plan. We support Libya in advancing the formulation of a constitution and amendment of the Libyan Political Agreement in order to prepare and organize presidential and parliamentary elections. We hope that Libya's neighbours, the African Union, the League of Arab States, the European Union and other parties will increase their efforts to promote peace and work together towards the implementation of the United Nations action plan.

China has always held the view that sanctions are not an end in themselves, rather they are a means that should always serve the political solution of relevant problems. While sanctions on Libya remain enforced, attention must be paid so that such sanctions will not negatively impact Libyan civilians in third countries. The sanctions should not harm the overall interests of Libya or the everyday lives and humanitarian needs of the Libyan population. The continued loss of Libya's frozen assets is an issue that deserves close scrutiny. We hope that the sanctions Committee will speedily look into that issue and respond appropriately to Libya's legitimate concerns in that regard.

We support any efforts that will help stabilize the situation in Libya, facilitate a political solution of the issue and promote unity among various parties in joining hands to fight terrorism. We stand ready to continue to do our part in contributing to the early restoration of security and stability and the achievement of prosperity and development in Libya.

Mr. Ipo (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation thanks Mr. Ghassan Salamé, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), for his informative briefing on the report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/780) on the developments in Libya and the challenges ahead for the restoration of peace and stability in the country. We also thank Ambassador Olof Skoog for the quality of his briefing on the thirty-first report of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011), concerning Libya.

At the previous briefing on the situation in Libya (see S/PV.8312), my delegation, like other members of the Council, welcomed the handover by the Libyan National Army of the management of the two oil terminals in the east of the country to the National Oil Corporation, which has a monopoly on hydrocarbon exports as provided for in resolution 2259 (2015). We also noted with satisfaction Prime Minister Faiez Serraj's initiatives to ensure a fair and transparent distribution of oil revenues by auditing the transactions of the Libyan Central Bank in Tripoli and Al Bayda. Those measures, which are the result of the transparent and inclusive management of hydrocarbon resources — the subject of tensions among the warring parties — have helped to improve the security situation in the oil crescent region.

However, the resumption of fighting in Tripoli among armed groups that had nevertheless committed themselves to join the process initiated by the Government of National Accord for ending the crisis dramatically reminds us of the precariousness of the overall security situation in Libya. The actions of those armed factions is likely to undermine the efforts of the international community to promote reconciliation among Libyans. Côte d'Ivoire therefore calls on rival armed factions in Derna to put an end to the clashes and allow unimpeded and safe access for humanitarian assistance to thousands of suffering Libyans in the city. We call on all the parties concerned to strictly respect the ceasefire and curfew decreed in Tripoli, in order to preserve the gains of the overall post-crisis process.

Côte d'Ivoire notes with deep concern the persistence of the smuggling of migrants and the gross violations of human rights in detention centres. We echo the Secretary-General's call for the closure of those centres and for respect for the rights of detainees. We deplore the deliberate administrative burdens that

prevent UNSMIL and humanitarian personnel from accessing the centres. Those obstacles do little to ensure respect for the rights of detainees or to improve their conditions of detention. My country also welcomes the Council's unity of action, which led to the imposition of sanctions on 7 June on six individuals involved in human trafficking in Libya.

Côte d'Ivoire would like to reaffirm its conviction that there will be no lasting peace and stability in Libya without accountability. We therefore urges the international community to assist the Libyan authorities in identifying and bringing to justice before the competent international courts those found guilty of trafficking in human beings and of serious human rights violations.

Côte d'Ivoire notes with regret that little progress has been made in implementing the commitments made by the Libyan parties at the conference held in Paris on 29 May to hold legislative and presidential elections on 10 December. The draft electoral laws for a referendum on a draft constitution, prepared by the Constituent Assembly, have not yet been adopted by the House of Representatives, although the Libyan parties committed themselves to organizing the referendum at the meeting of the African Union High-Level Committee on Libya that took place in Dakar from 11 to 13 May.

In that regard, my delegation would like to commend the efforts of French diplomacy, which organized a meeting on 23 July among the four Libyan representatives who endorsed the Paris agreement, during which they renewed their support for the holding of the elections on 10 December and the reunification of the country's institutions. Côte d'Ivoire also commends the work of the High National Electoral Commission and encourages all efforts to respect the electoral calendar. We urge the Libyan parties and the international community to work to improve the security situation, which is essential for the holding of democratic, credible and peaceful elections, as mentioned in the Secretary-General's report.

In conclusion, I would like to extend my delegation's congratulations to Mr. Salamé and all UNSMIL staff for the quality of their work in an extremely challenging environment. To Ms. Stephanie Williams, the new Deputy Special Representative for Political Affairs in Libya, we wish every success in her new position.

Mr. Skoog (Sweden): I would also like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Salamé for his sobering, but always clear, assessment of the volatile situation in Libya and, more important, for his successful efforts to halt the most recent escalation of violence.

I will focus my statement on the security situation in Tripoli, its connection to the political process and the humanitarian situation for the civilian population.

First, we are deeply concerned about the escalation of violence in Tripoli last week, which resulted in many civilian causalities, including children among the dead and injured. We join the Secretary-General and others in condemning all violence and indiscriminate shelling by armed groups. Those acts constitute violations of international humanitarian law and violations or abuses of international human rights law.

The ceasefire brokered by the United Nations must now be actively supported. We urge all parties to respect and implement the agreement, including to end all hostilities, protect civilians and re-open the Mitiga airport. Safe and unhindered humanitarian access must also be ensured, and those civilians who wish to leave must be allowed to do so.

Countries with influence over the parties must ensure that they deliver on their commitments, and those groups that did not attend the mediation meeting yesterday should be urged to join the ceasefire agreement immediately. We remind those who threaten peace and stability in Libya that they will be held accountable. We remain open to exploring the use of the sanctions instrument in that regard.

The continued flow of illegal arms risks fuelling the escalation of violence and increases the suffering of the civilian population. As Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011), concerning Libya, I therefore call on all Member States to honour their obligations under the relevant resolutions and fully implement the sanctions, including the arms embargo.

Secondly, recent developments demonstrate the lack of commitment and progress by some towards a political solution, as well as the dangers of the continued security vacuum. Actors that benefit from instability and the status quo are actively hindering the political process. That cannot be accepted and must be countered. We now hope that the ceasefire agreement can be built upon to further the broader political process.

Efforts to provide the conditions needed for free, fair, inclusive and credible elections, which are crucial for the democratic process in the country, must be stepped up. In that regard, we call on the House of Representatives, as others have done, to honour its commitment to help ensure a legal basis for elections. We encourage the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to push ahead and exhaust all legal avenues and options to move the political process forward. Efforts to promote transparency, accountability and unity of the financial institutions are also an important part of that. The Special Representative set that out extensively and clearly again today. The Council must stand fully behind the Special Representative in those important endeavours.

A sustainable political process in Libya requires the full and equal participation of women. To that end, we encourage the work of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) with networks of politically active Libyan women, with the aim to promote the nomination of women for the elections. Another meeting of the Council's Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security will be convened on Libya this fall to follow up on how the Council can best support those efforts.

Thirdly, we welcome UNSMIL's reporting on international humanitarian law and human rights. The dire situation in Libya's detention facilities, mentioned by many today, including its migrant detention centres and prisons, continues to be of deep concern. The reports on arbitrary detention, torture and sexual and gender-based violence — for instance, in Mitiga, Zuwarah, Abu Salim and eastern Libya — are unacceptable. Such violations and abuses must immediately come to an end.

Humanitarian access must be ensured and violations must be investigated, including of alleged summary executions, and those responsible for such crimes must be held to account. The Libyan authorities must also fully implement the human rights due diligence policy and ensure proper vetting processes.

Now is a decisive moment for Libya. The Security Council and the broader international community must rally behind the Special Representative, support the urgent implementation of the United Nations action plan and respect the leading role of the United Nations in the mediation efforts. It is crucial that we continue to stand united in our support. We therefore support the issuance of a press statement, as suggested by the representative of the United Kingdom today, to reflect the unity of the Security Council and its support for the efforts of the Special Representative.

Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren (Netherlands): I join others in thanking the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Salamé, and Ambassador Skoog for their informative briefings.

Seven years ago, the Libyan people initiated change. There was hope — hope for a prosperous, safe and democratic future for Libya. However, the past years have shown the fragility of the situation and the many impediments to real progress towards that aspired future for Libya. That was confirmed once more today by Special Representative Salamé in his sobering briefing. Because of the many challenges, and despite spoilers who prevent smooth progress, we need to remain united in supporting United Nations-led efforts in Libya. We need to do that for the Libyan people, because they have had enough of the political crisis and the uncertain and unsafe conditions of daily life.

In that regard, the current situation in Tripoli, where militias have been fighting at the cost of civilians, is especially concerning. We urge all sides to continue to cooperate with the United Nations and fully adhere to the ceasefire brokered by the United Nations. Differences need to be settled through peaceful dialogue, and the security situation has to improve, as a prerequisite for progress on other tracks as well.

I will focus on three elements in more detail: ending the political crisis; the economic situation and the need for transparency and coordinating international efforts; and the humanitarian and human rights situation.

On the need for progress on the political process, the Kingdom of the Netherlands recognizes Libya's extremely complex political and security situation. That serves to highlight the need for an inclusive Libyan-owned and Libyan-led political process. Therefore, we confirm our full support for the efforts of Mr. Salamé and his team to that end. That important works needs to continue, including the full implementation of the United Nations action plan.

Libya needs a democratic political transition that fosters peace and stability. New elections should be held, if the right conditions are met. Technical, legislative, political and security conditions have to be in place for elections to be credible, peaceful and inclusive. Moreover, the meaningful participation

of women as voters and as candidates is crucial. The elected institutions of Libya should work constructively on a new constitutional framework and inclusive Government, and political spoilers should be held accountable for their actions.

Secondly, on the economic situation and the need for increased transparency, the present state of the economy contributes negatively to the complexity of the political situation. There are parties benefiting from maintaining the status quo, while the population and country as a whole struggle. Businesses, services and households cannot function normally with only a few hours of electricity a day. The economic crisis, including the depreciation of the national currency, price hikes and a liquidity crisis, has a devastating effect on the livelihoods of Libyan citizens. Therefore, more efforts are needed to improve Libya's economy.

The financial management of the country needs urgent repair. That includes establishing transparency in Libya's economic and financial institutions and the unification of the Central Bank. We therefore thank the Special Representative and the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) for their timely response to the Security Council's request for financial review and audit options. The Kingdom of the Netherlands continues to support efforts to broaden transparency on a multilateral and bilateral basis. We value the role of UNSMIL in that regard.

My third, and final, point is on the humanitarian and human rights situation. We remain deeply concerned by ongoing serious human rights violations across Libya, as documented in the Secretary-General's report (S/2018/780). A few examples are: the high number of civilian casualties due to fighting and violence; migrants and refugees who remain vulnerable to the risk of arbitrary detention, torture, sexual violence, abduction for ransom and unlawful killings; and the forced eviction of displaced Tawerghan families from the Tariq al-Matar Camp. That serves to underline that we need to establish the rule of law in Libya, and we call on all Libyan parties to respect applicable international humanitarian law and human rights law. Moreover, strengthening donor coordination in the areas of humanitarian aid, security and human rights remains vital.

In June, the Council took the courageous step of targeting human traffickers and smugglers through sanctions. Implementing the sanctions measures diligently should remain our priority. Pending criminal investigations into such crimes, the Council should stand ready to consider additional listings, in order to dismantle destabilizing criminal networks that profit from the climate of impunity in Libya and its bordering region.

In conclusion, the human rights situation is not some additional aspect of the crisis in Libya; rather, it is the yardstick for progress and how the human rights of all Libyans can be guaranteed. In that light, we welcome the progress made towards the finalization of the United Nations strategic framework for the period 2019-2020 and the launch of the human rights working group, co-chaired by the Ministry of Justice and UNSMIL, under the coordination framework for international assistance.

Ms. Guadey (Ethiopia): We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Ghassan Salamé, for his briefing and Ambassador Skoog for his report, in his capacity as the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011), concerning Libya. We strongly support the Special Representative's continued diplomatic endeavours to facilitate an end to the Libyan crisis. In particular, we highly appreciate his efforts to mediate between the various Libyan actors, which produced a ceasefire agreement signed yesterday to end all hostilities and to protect civilians and civilian facilities.

While we welcome the agreement reached under the auspices of the Special Representative, we condemn the recent violence in Tripoli, particularly the indiscriminate shelling — as noted by the Secretary-General in his 2 September statement — by armed groups in neighbourhood areas, which caused civilian deaths and injuries. We express our condolences and solidarity to the people of Libya, particularly to those who lost their loved ones.

While the people of Libya, who have suffered a lot, have been raising their united voices in favour of of an end to the protracted transition through political means, the violence in the capital has no justification. It only poses a serious threat to the country's stability, undermining efforts to fully implement the United Nations action plan. The violence has also jeopardized the safety of all vulnerable groups, including internally displaced persons, migrants and refugees. We join others in calling on all parties to fully implement the ceasefire agreement by immediately ceasing

hostilities and engaging constructively with the Special Representative.

While expressing our support for the legitimate authorities of Libya, we underscore that political objectives should be pursued only through dialogue, not violence. All parties should also cooperate with United Nations humanitarian workers to provide aid for all in need, particularly those trapped in the fighting. It is also important to ensure safe, unhindered and sustained humanitarian access to affected areas.

The use of violence by armed groups to control State institutions and the widespread violations of human rights with a sense of impunity are major impediments to resolving the multifaceted crisis in Libya. For now, it is obvious that halting the violence and restoring calm to Tripoli should be the priority. At the same time, we underline that the full and timely implementation of the United Nations action plan remains the only way to find a long-term and comprehensive solution to the violence in Libya.

We reiterate that only a comprehensive, Libyan-led and -owned political process facilitated by the United Nations can return Libya to the path of peace and stability. While it is critical to hold elections according to the United Nations action plan, we concur with the Secretary-General who stresses in his latest report (S/2018/780) on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) that it is equally important that the proper conditions be in place for credible and successful elections. Therefore, all Libyan political actors should honour their commitments to holding peaceful and legitimate elections that are acceptable to all Libyans. Furthermore, all required security, legal and administrative conditions should be fulfilled.

Bringing a peaceful end to the transition in Libya will also require unifying armed and police institutions. As the report of the Secretary-General underlines, "[t]here is a clear need to build professional, accountable and unified security institutions throughout the country" (*S/2018/780, para. 79*), both to ensure the State's monopoly on the legitimate use of force, as well as to find a sustainable solution to the issue of armed groups. In addition, promoting national reconciliation, as has been repeatedly stated by the African Union, is essential to restoring trust and social bonds among communities. Besides, as the people of Libya have been affirming through the national conference process, addressing economic difficulties and delivering public services by protecting national wealth and improving the distribution of resources remains critical.

At this critical juncture, restoring stability to the capital and implementing the United Nations action plan will require the strong commitment and cooperation of all Libyan actors. In that regard, all Libyan actors should engage meaningfully and constructively with the Special Representative to support his continuous and tireless efforts to fully operationalize the United Nations action plan. Neighbouring countries and relevant regional organizations should also continue to coordinate their work in support of the efforts of the United Nations.

The Security Council should continue to speak with one voice and extend strong support to Special Representative Salamé. The Council should also provide backing to UNSMIL, which has been continuously and gradually increasing its presence in Tripoli and elsewhere in Libya. While UNSMIL should continue to intensify its engagement as security conditions allow, we appreciate its efforts thus far under the leadership of the Special Representative in support of the country's endeavours to end its transition.

As Libya continues to face multiple challenges, including stabilizing the capital city, we hope that the Council will have a constructive and positive dialogue that will renew the UNSMIL mandate and enable it to continue to play a key role in realizing the legitimate aspirations of all Libyans.

Mrs. Cordova Soria (Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the briefing of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, Mr. Ghassan Salamé. We reiterate our full support for his ongoing efforts. We also welcome Ambassador Olof Skoog's briefing on the activities carried out by the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya.

Bolivia expresses its deep concern at the continued escalation of violence during the reporting period throughout Libyan territory, particularly in the city of Tripoli, which saw the indiscriminate use of rockets, mortars and explosive ordnance by armed groups in civilian areas. According to reports of various United Nations agencies, such attacks significantly damaged schools, mosques and private residences, as well as hospitals and medical centres, and in recent weeks alone have been responsible for at least 69 deaths, including women and children.

We remind all concerned parties and actors that, in the framework of international humanitarian law, they are obliged to ensure the security and physical integrity of civilians and civilian areas and infrastructure. They are also responsible for applying the principles of distinction and proportionality. Otherwise, these deliberate attacks could be construed as war crimes, which would then fall under the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court for their investigation and judgment. We therefore ask them to join and respect the de-escalation and ceasefire efforts promoted by the Special Representative.

Moreover, we are alarmed by reports of widespread violations of the human rights of the 8,000 refugees and migrants confined to detention centres operated by the Government and those under the control of armed groups. The Secretary-General's report (S/2018/780) attests to the violation of the rights of these people, who are detained indefinitely in inadequate conditions and subjected to degrading treatment, torture, forced labour, sexual violence and the denial of medical aid.

This terrible situation is compounded by the crisis in the Mediterranean Sea, where in July and August 255 immigrants perished. That figure increases this year's fatalities to more than 1,500 people. That reality highlights the urgent necessity of addressing the situation in a cross-cutting and permanent manner. We therefore call on the parties to prevent such abuses of the rights of migrants and refugees, and we remind them to fulfil their obligations under international law. We urgently call upon Libyan authorities to launch the necessary investigations to prevent impunity for such atrocities.

The acts of violence and the increase in clashes during the reporting period undoubtedly threaten the political process and the safety of the population. As such, my delegation reiterates the importance of the full implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement in order to definitively put an end to the transition period. In that regard, and bearing in mind the commitment undertaken by the parties to hold parliamentary and presidential elections by the end of this year, it is imperative to move forward with the necessary consultations on the new Constitution and to develop the necessary legislation establishing in a clear and concrete way the elements and requirements for proceeding with this process. We therefore call on the parties and on local actors to refrain from confrontational rhetoric that may weaken or obstruct these efforts and, on the contrary, to commit unconditionally to engaging in dialogue and implementing the Libyan Political Agreement.

At the same time, with regard to efforts to support and assist the strengthening of the Libyan political process and the action plan supported by the Special Representative, we underscore the efforts of the African Union and of countries such as Egypt, Algeria , Tunisia and Senegal, among others. We would also like to highlight the activities of the United Nations Mine Action Service to assist and support the Libyan authorities in their efforts to monitor the flow of arms, munitions and explosives, as well as technical assistance to identify and eliminate explosive remnants of war — including, for example, the destruction of 200 tonnes of explosives in the city of Misrata — to guarantee the security of humanitarian assistance and the dignified return of internally displaced individuals.

My delegation reiterates that there can be no military solution to this conflict, which is why we call on all parties to abide by all of the resolutions adopted by the Security Council, in particular resolution 2259 (2015) and presidential statement S/PRST/2017/26 of 14 December 2017, and to join efforts under way to pursue ongoing dialogue to pave the way for a peaceful, orderly and inclusive political transition that will meet the interests of the Libyan people and enable them freely and consensually to define their future.

In conclusion, it is important to reiterate and keep in mind that the impact of the Libyan conflict on security in the region is a direct consequence of interventionist practice and regime-change policies that have had a collateral impact in the Sahel, unleashing an upsurge in chaos, terrorism and militarization, whose tragic results reverberate to this very day.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United States.

We would like to thank Special Representative Salamé for his sobering briefing today. The key conclusion from today's meeting is that he has the full support of the Security Council for his work. We are united behind him.

The recent escalating violence in Tripoli continues to undermine an already fragile Libya. The Libyan people deserve peace and security. We welcome yesterday's announcement by the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) that a cessation of hostilities had been reached. The United States stands fully with

Libya as UNSMIL continues its mediation efforts, and we call on all Libyan parties to refrain from any action that could undermine the ceasefire and setback Libyan efforts to advance the political process. Any attempt to weaken Libyan authorities and hamper the course of the United Nations-facilitated political process is totally unacceptable, as we reiterated with our partners from France, Italy and the United Kingdom yesterday and this past weekend.

Since the revolution, seven years ago, the Libyan people have been asking for things that any of us would want. They want an end to the fighting. They want to see basic services, like electricity and water, switched back on. They want to see Libya's oil wealth invested for the benefit of the people. They want the dignity of living in a State that respects their rights after decades of tyranny. The sad truth is that a small number of political spoilers, in some cases backed by militias, block this vision. Looking out for their own narrow interests, they undermine the United Nations' hard work to get dialogue under way. This has to end.

There should be no military path to power in Libya. If the violence gets worse, the only winners will be terrorists and criminals. More fighting plays into the hands of human traffickers, who are committing unspeakable abuses as they funnel desperate people onto dangerous journeys towards Europe.

A different path for Libya is possible. A handful of political spoilers should not be permitted to hold this process hostage. All of us, especially our European partners, Libya's neighbours and countries of the region, need to say "enough is enough". We need to push Libya's different factions to enter into actual negotiations.

As the recent instability in Tripoli clearly demonstrated, we need a realistic road map for Libya to move towards secure, credible and inclusive elections as soon as possible, rooted in an inclusive constitutional process. It is obvious from today's discussions that we are all impatient to see progress but imposing false deadlines will backfire and could lead to even worse divisions inside Libya. We look to UNSMIL to guide the international community towards an understanding of what that realistic road map entails.

The Government of National Accord is a steadfast partner of the United States and we commend its efforts throughout this challenging period. The Government of National Accord shares our goal of a more secure and stable Libya that will be a partner in international efforts to fight terrorism. We fully endorse UNSMIL's central role in support of the Government of National Accord's economic reform agenda to help address fiscal transparency and equitable distribution of resources across Libya for all Libyans.

We were pleased that the Security Council was able to designate six migrant-smugglers earlier this year for their abuses in Libya. This was the first time that we have ever used sanctions to respond to migrant trafficking. We remain deeply concerned about the welfare of these migrants and will also keep up our efforts to ensure that criminal gangs involved in such activity cannot operate with impunity.

Despite all of these challenges, one thing has not changed in Libya — that is the potential of the Libyan people and their keen desire to create a better country for themselves. I would like to share the story of Fatima Nasser, a 21-year old living in the southern city of Seba. Fatima is an entrepreneur who realized that her hometown had an amazing untapped resource — not oil, but food. Women across the city were at home preparing superb dishes in their kitchens. The food was so good Fatima thought that people would be willing to pay for it. She created an app that links customers with these at-home chefs. Women are now starting to earn income from their homes and the Libyan public is enjoying purchases of home-cooked meals. The app is taking off. Fatima is launching her service and Libya's largest cities very soon. Silicon Valley should have an eye on people like Fatima.

The point is that Libyans are ready to build a brighter future. Our responsibility is to help them get there.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Libya.

Mr. Elmajerbi (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate your country, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the Council for this month. I also express my appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), contained in document S/2018/780.

I also thank Mr. Ghassan Salamé, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya, for his briefing on the latest political, economic and security developments in my country. I also thank His

Excellency Ambassador Olof Skoog for his briefing as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya.

The latest bloody events in the suburbs of the capital Tripoli, which have been condemned by my Government and the international community, illustrate the scale of the security problems in Libya. They have undoubtedly demonstrated that local and international parties harbour ill intentions. They seek to maintain the status quo in Libya and to undermine any efforts to achieve peace.

Whenever Libyans have felt that they are close to finding a solution to their protracted crisis, they are faced with contrived conflicts and problems leading to armed violence that subjects civilian lives and property to the most terrible dangers and damages. In that regard, I would like to recall that the first Security Council resolution pertaining to the Libyan issue, adopted in 2011 — resolution 1970 (2011) — was on the protection of civilians, who unfortunately are still suffering from the senseless and irresponsible use of all kinds of weapons in densely populated areas by parties that seek to obstruct the establishment of State institutions that protect the nation and the citizens. In an environment where the language of arms prevails, it is hard for any Government in the world to undertake its tasks. Hence, it is almost impossible for State institutions to function. That is why the process of disarmament in my country must be at the top of the priority list.

My Government stresses that the United Nations, especially the Security Council, must implement serious, swift and robust programmes to disarm lawless armed groups. Each case must be dealt with separately through programmes and plans prepared by specialized United Nations entities. Those entities have made great achievements in many countries experiencing through situations similar to the one in my country. We ask the Council to call upon all the Libyan parties to understand that any military action to rule the country is unacceptable to Libyans and the international community. They should be urged to step up their efforts to overcome this crisis.

It is also important to complete the constitutional process paving the way to holding free and fair general elections that lead to the establishment of elected constitutional institutions, while achieving stability, development and prosperity for the Libyan people. In that regard, my country's delegation would like to thank UNSMIL for the efforts undertaken to tackle the security problem that the city of Tripoli is suffering from these days. Its efforts were successful, and a ceasefire agreement was signed on Tuesday, 4 September. We hope that all parties will observe it.

The dire economic situation in Libya is also a result of the deteriorating security situation and the abhorrent interference by some influential actors, corrupt people and weapon users in the work of the State's economic institutions, especially the banking sector. That of course had a severe adverse effect on the living conditions of the Libyan people. It was the reason for low liquidity and lack of services.

The parties to the Libyan Political Agreement, signed in Skhirat on 17 December 2015, have also not fulfilled their commitments. They have continued to use grotesque practices to avoid meeting those commitments. That has also contributed considerably to the deterioration of the economic situation. My Government is trying to find solutions through clear economic plans. However, we need legislation for that. The Parliament must address the issue in order to alleviate the hardship for the Libyan people.

Various United Nations reports and the Public Prosecutor's office in Libya confirm that Libyans and foreigners are subjected to human rights violations. That is outrageous and unacceptable to all Libyans. We highlight that, while many violations have taken place, they will not stop and their perpetrators will continue to enjoy impunity as long as the security situation does not improve. Legislative bodies should be helped through serious work and full international cooperation with my country. Supporters in other countries of armed groups in Libya must refrain from spreading their venom in my country. International action is needed to achieve stability. That is an absolute necessity for Libya and the international community.

We would like to recall that a year has passed since the adoption of the United Nation action plan on Libya in the Security Council, on 20 September 2017. The action plan has not yet been implemented, while various parties are using different excuses and completely disregarding the suffering of the Libyan people.

My country's delegation underscores that the Security Council must be united, bear its responsibilities, call upon all parties to end the political crisis within a set time frame, implement the United Nations action plan and initiate the constitutional arrangements needed

for the holding of democratic elections — undertaken and decided upon by Libyan voters.

In conclusion, my country's delegation would like to note that statements and declarations issued here and there will not silence the guns, stop the destruction of public and private property, save the lives of teenagers who are forced to fight or stop human rights violations. The Security Council needs to take decisive action and a serious stance to hold accountable all those who stand in the way of restoring peace, security and tranquillity. The Council must end the plight that has been going on in my country for too long. It is high time to end it and impose severe sanctions on the perpetrators.

The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.